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ABSTRACT

A study examined the publicly-funded vocational education and training (VET) system in South Australia (SA) in 1997. Background information indicated SA is a geographically large state with a relatively small population that is older compared to the rest of Australia, with 14 percent aged over 65 compared with 12 percent nationally. Findings were that SA accounts for about 8 percent of the Australian population, 10 percent of publicly-funded VET students, and about 8 percent of apprentices and trainees. Of the population aged 15-64 years, 11.6 percent undertook some kind of VET, above the national average of 10.5 percent. SA has the highest proportion of female students with 53 percent, well above the national average of 48.1 percent. Female VET students had a slightly higher module completion rate. Technical and further education (TAFE) qualifications increased the chances of finding work, and more than one quarter of all TAFE graduates named "to get a job" their main reason for undertaking study. Manufacturing, construction, and retail industries accounted for nearly three quarters of all apprenticeships and traineeships in SA. Employers cited these three areas of change as most likely to affect future training needs: advancing technology and automation, the need for workers to be more qualified or skilled, and government policies and legislation. SA students and employers were generally satisfied with VET provision. (YLB)

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NCVER

an overview

South Australia

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South Australia

an overview

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Published by
NCVER Ltd. 252 Kensington Road,
LEABROOK SA 5068
Australia

E-mail: vet_req@ncver.edu.au
Telephone: (08) 8333 8400
Facsimile: (08) 8331 9211
Web page: http://www.ncver.edu.au

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Foreword

Australian VET: South Australia – an overview

We are pleased to introduce this publication, which focusses on the publicly-funded vocational education and training (VET) system in South Australia and seeks to provide an overview of its students, and its outputs and outcomes. The focus is on VET activity in 1997.

In all States and Territories the VET sector is an important element in Australia's education and training system. It builds on but also complements the education and training provided by the secondary school and higher education sectors. The sector also provides preparation and skill training in a wide range of vocational areas and spanning a wide range of levels. The sector makes a significant contribution to the stock of skills in Australia.

During the 1990s, through co-operative arrangements involving the Commonwealth, the eight States and Territories and the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA), Australia has moved towards a more integrated, responsive and nationally consistent VET system.

However, the needs of VET students vary considerably at the local, State and Territory levels. In order to be effective, the VET sector must meet these needs. State and Territory training authorities, such as the Department of Education, Training and Employment in Adelaide, are central to the process of balancing local, State or Territory, and national requirements.

These considerations are particularly relevant to South Australia with, for example, an older population compared with the major eastern seaboard States. VET is particularly important for providing employers, people in the workforce, and people entering the workforce, with the skills they need.

The information presented in this publication is drawn from a wide variety of sources, including:

- population and labour force statistics as prepared by the Australian Bureau of Statistics;
- the national collection of data from VET providers, the national collection of apprentice and trainee data, and the national collection of VET financial data;
- the 1998 Graduate Destination Survey and the 1997 Employer Satisfaction Survey; and
- other published commentary and analysis.

It is not possible for this publication to cover every aspect of the State's VET system. However, we hope that factors specific to South Australia are recognised without losing sight of the importance of national initiatives and national strategic directions.

The publication has been prepared by the NCVER's Statistical Services Division. I would also like to acknowledge the input provided by staff of the Department of Education, Training and Employment in Adelaide.

We believe that the information compiled for this publication clearly shows the importance of the VET sector for South Australians.

Chris Robinson
Managing Director
NCVER Ltd.
November 1999

Geoff Spring
Chief Executive
Department of Education, Training and Employment
November 1999

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Main findings

South Australia is a geographically large State with a relatively small population. Its area is almost one million square kilometres and the population of nearly 1.5 million is 8% of the national total. South Australia's population is relatively older in comparison with the rest of Australia, with 14% of its population aged over 65 compared with 12% nationally. Most of the State's population is Australian born.

The main findings are:

- South Australia accounts for about 8% of the Australian population, about 10% of publicly-funded VET students and about 8% of apprentice and trainees in training in Australia.
- Of the South Australian population aged 15 to 64 years (973,000 people), 11.6% undertook some kind of VET in 1997, which is above the national average of 10.5%.
- South Australia has the highest proportion of female students with 53.0%, well above the national average of 48.1%. However, males represented 53.2% of 15 to 24 year olds compared with 46.8% for females.
- Females were significantly more likely than males to be undertaking a VET course in *Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*; *Business, Administration and Economics*; *Health and Community Services*; and *Services, Hospitality and Transport* fields of study.
- Female VET students in South Australia have a slightly higher module completion rate than males (85.4% and 82.8%, respectively).
- In 1997, 18.4% of South Australian indigenous students continued their study of a module into the following year. The corresponding rate for all South Australian students was 6.1%.
- TAFE qualifications in South Australia increase the chances of finding work. About 60% of TAFE graduates who were unemployed before commencing their course had found work after completing their course and about 81% of all South Australian graduates were employed a short time after completing their course. This latter percentage compares favourably with that of 58.1% for the national working age population.
- Over 53% of South Australian graduates from longer TAFE courses obtained an AQF Certificate III or IV or its equivalent.
- More than one quarter of all TAFE graduates nominated *To get a job* as their main reason for undertaking study. 15 to 19 year olds were mostly likely to nominate this as a reason (44%) followed by 20 to 24 year olds (32%).
- The *Manufacturing*, *Construction* and *Retail* industries combined account for nearly three quarters of all apprenticeships and traineeships in South Australia.
- *Advancing technology and automation*, *Need for workers to be more qualified or skilled* and *Government policies and legislation* were the three areas of change cited by employers as most likely to affect future training needs.
- South Australian students and employers were generally satisfied with the provision of VET in the State.

Section 1: Introduction and summary

Introduction

About this publication

Australian Vocational Education and Training: South Australia – an overview provides summary information about people who undertook vocational education and training in South Australia with providers in receipt of public funds. The information is based on data collected under the Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information and Statistical Standard (AVETMISS) along with information from the NCVER 1998 TAFE Graduate Destination Survey, the NCVER 1997 Employer Satisfaction Survey, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and various analytical papers.

This publication is designed to provide a concise and up-to-date overview of the state of vocational education and training as it presently exists in South Australia. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the content of the report has been presented in a simple and easily read format, it must be pointed out that it has been written with the expectation that it will be read by persons working in, or otherwise familiar with the Australian vocational education and training system.

South Australia – a profile

Population

South Australia is a geographically large state with a relatively small population. With an area of 984,000 square kilometres it represents one eighth of the Australian landmass. Vast areas of South Australia are remote or rural being made up of national parks, plains and desert, featuring the Mt Lofty and Flinders Ranges and salt lakes such as Lake Eyre as well as pastoral land including the arable land adjacent to the Murray River.

With a population of nearly 1.5 million it accounts for 8% of the Australian population. It is the second smallest State in Australia after Tasmania in terms of population size. Despite the State's geographic size with many 'outback' areas, it has a large urban population with almost 75% of South Australians living in the state capital Adelaide. Whyalla and Mount Gambier are the only two other centres with populations over 20,000. With a heavy urban concentration on the one hand, small agricultural communities and remote settlements on the other, and with declining populations in some remote areas, a distinct challenge is

Treatment of data

Readers should be aware that owing to rounding or some unknown or missing data the percentages shown throughout this document may not always add to 100.

In many of the tables there is a substantial number of missing cases, that is, individuals for whom a result was not known. Where this is so, attention is drawn to the fact by showing the percentage of the total number of students for which data are known. The total numbers of students are shown at the foot of each column and identified as 'Number'. Where percentages are calculated on the known data, as they generally are, they should be used with caution when high proportions of data are not known.

In some cases the age and sex variables for VET students and TAFE graduates have been pro-rated to take account of missing data. Thus the percentages in Table 3 all add to 100. Where this has been done a note has been added to the table.

Scope

The data used in this publication include all vocational education and training delivered in South Australia by TAFE and other government providers, registered community providers, some vocational education and training delivered in schools, and publicly-funded delivery by private providers. Fee for service delivery by private providers has been excluded. For comparative purposes reference is also made to national data.

Age

Ages for the 1997 collection are calculated as the difference in years between 30 June 1997 and the student's date of birth.

placed on the planning and delivery of VET in South Australia. Distance education techniques are seen as one way of increasing participation in VET for those living in rural and remote parts of the State.

Although South Australia has a relatively large number of remote and rural communities, and a number of Aboriginal settlements (for example, Ernabella in the far north), only about 1.4% of the population were identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, in contrast to 2% of the national population. This proportion may be underestimated, owing to a tendency for people not to declare their indigenous origin. Between the 1991 and 1996 Censuses there was an increase of 26% in people in South Australia identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Similar to Australia as a whole, about 75% of South Australians are Australian born. About 11% of its population is of a non-English speaking origin compared with 13% of all Australians.

South Australia's population is relatively older than that for Australia as a whole, with 14% of its population aged 65 years or older compared with 12% nationally. The median age of the population, at 35 years, has increased by two years between 1991 and 1996. About 21% of the South Australian population compared with 22% of the Australian population were aged 14 years or less. The movement of younger people and families from South Australia and the State's lower than average levels of migration from overseas has contributed to this aging of the population.

Only 44% of the South Australian population holds a post school qualification in comparison to 48% of the Australian population. The aging population, along with its relatively low skill levels are important issues in the provision of retraining, multi skilling and lifelong learning.

The labour force of 661,000 people had declined by about 22,000 or 3% between the 1991 and 1996 Censuses. This was reflected in both the numbers employed and unemployed, however, the numbers employed declined by a smaller amount (about 2%). Women made up about 44% of the South Australian labour force, slightly above the national proportion of 43%. They made up about 74% of the part-time labour force, similar to the national figure. South Australia had an unemployment rate of 9.6% in 1997, around one percentage point higher than the national average. Long-term unemployment is also a problem in South Australia. Teenage unemployment is also consistently above the national level. The level of structural change associated with the State's reliance on industries such as agriculture and manufacturing, is a contributing factor to unemployment, which has been consistently above the national rate in recent years.

Participation in the labour force and unemployment vary considerably amongst metropolitan, regional and remote locations. Relatively low recorded unemployment levels in rural and remote locations may indicate hidden unemployment and the movement of workers to Adelaide and interstate.

Economy

The South Australian economy and its employment was strongly based on its agriculture and manufacturing industry base. Agriculture contributed 6% of the South Australian Gross State Product and manufacturing 17%. These levels were significantly above the national contribution of these industries to Gross National Product (4% and 15% respectively).

Exports, both overseas and interstate, were important to the South Australian economic activity. The major exports were agricultural produce (wheat, wool and meat) metals and metals manufacture, cereals and cereal preparations with wine as an export growth industry. The State is Australia's largest producer of wines and spirits.

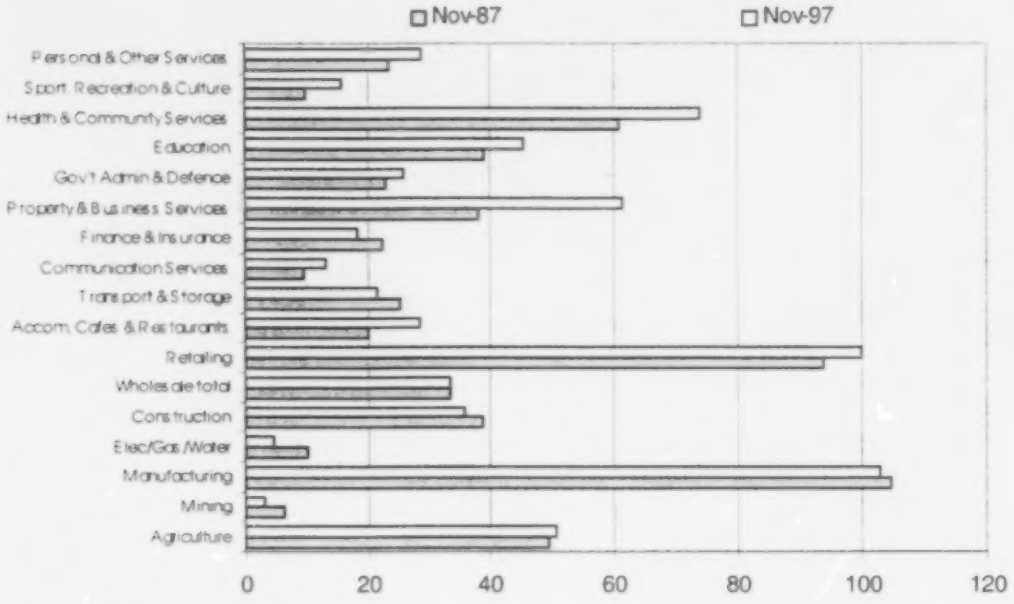
South Australian agriculture contributed over 10% of the gross value of the Australian industry. This is based on cereal crops (South Australia grows 13% of Australia's wheat and about a third of its barley),

grapes (for wine and dried fruit) and other fruit, vegetable and nut crops. About 8% of the South Australian workforce was employed in agriculture.

Labour Market

Over the last decade the services sector has provided the majority of new employment opportunities, whilst the traditional primary and secondary industries fell in significance as employers of labour (figure 1).

Figure 1: Employment change by industry division in South Australia 1987 - 1997



Source: ABS Labour Force Survey

The main growth industry in South Australia was property and business services, which recorded a growth of 60% or 23,000 jobs over the decade to 1997. Other areas of strong growth included accommodation, cafes and restaurants which increased by 8,400 jobs (42%) and sport and recreation which increased 5,900 jobs or 60%. Mining and electricity, gas and water were the industries which showed a halving of employment over the decade (losing 5,600 and 3,400 jobs, respectively).

Manufacturing was the largest employing industry, accounting for 15% of the employed workforce. The metals manufacturing industries were important to the state economy, particularly motor vehicles and parts, domestic appliances and iron and steel. The food and beverage manufacturing industry was also significant in South Australia, particularly wine and brandy production, fruit and vegetable processing and meat production. The other major South Australian employing industries were the service industries: retail (14% of employment); health and community services (11%); property and business services (9%) and education (8%).

Small businesses, particularly those with less than five employees, accounted for about 95% of South Australian business. Small business accounted for half of the non-agricultural workforce. They featured strongly in the services sector, particularly retail trade, property and business services, wholesale trade, health and community services, and personal and other services.

Summary of main features

The VET system in South Australia

The publicly funded VET system in South Australia provided for about 141,500 students or 10% of national VET students. This figure was higher than South Australia's population share of 8%. Whilst South Australia accounted for some 8% of national course delivery, shorter courses were common as it accounted for only about 7% of annual hours curriculum. South Australia delivered 19.8 million curriculum hours in 1997, an average of 140 hours per student, compared with the 200 hour Australian average. Women tended to study in shorter courses than their male counterparts, and South Australia had the highest proportion of women students amongst the Australian States. Whilst South Australia accounted for 10% of VET students, it had a 16% share of students with Recognised Prior Learning or Credit Transfer entitlements. This also probably contributed to the lower module enrolments and curriculum hours.

VET providers

NCVER financial data showed that total expenditure on publicly funded VET in South Australia was almost $290 million annually, about 7% of the national total. Over half, 55% of expenditure, was made on direct delivery of vocational education and training. Government appropriation provided 77% of this and 23% was provided through operating revenues such as fees for service and student fees and charges. South Australia had 14% of course enrolments funded by fee-for-service, a level higher than the 10% for Australia. In addition it is estimated that South Australian employers spent $90 million on structured training including in-house training in the September quarter of 1996.

South Australia allocated about 6% of its public funds through competitive tendering processes that were open to public and private providers. Funds were allocated through User Choice principles (including pilot programmes and funds for Traineeship Programmes allocated through this process) amounting to 3% of its budget. By the year 2000, it is planned that Registered Training Organisations will be able to access up to 20% of training funds through the competitive tendering process. The major ways that this will impact are through the Open Training Market Strategy, and New Apprenticeship and User Choice initiatives.

The major provision of VET in South Australia is through its TAFE system. Eight institutes provided training for over 90,000 students in five programme areas including: human services; information industries and applied design; primary industries, tourism and hospitality; business services; and manufacturing, construction and transport services.

VET students

The provision of publicly funded vocational education and training has broadened in recent years, not only through utilising private providers of vocational education and training but also the adult and community education sector and schools. There are also co-operative ventures with the State's universities in provision of vocational training pathways between the sectors.

Some 58% of South Australian awards were endorsements, other certificates or statements of attainment, or non-award courses compared with 47% nationally.

South Australia also delivered a high proportion of TAFE Multi-Field Education courses (29% compared with 20% nationally). Unlike all other States except New South Wales, the majority of South Australian VET students were female. South Australia had the greatest proportion of female students (53%) amongst all states. Nationally, 48% of students were female. However, for 15 to 24 year olds, male participation was three percentage points higher than that for females.

In South Australia 36% of people did not report on Aboriginality and 35% did not answer questions on ethnicity. This compared to 24% and 22% nationally. In 1997, 2,300 South Australian indigenous

students were recorded, 6% of the national total of students of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. They lived in metropolitan Adelaide or rural areas (40% each) and remote areas (20%).

One in ten students (10%) reported being born in mainly non-English speaking countries, slightly below the 11% of the population. Nearly half of the 10,700 students reported southern or eastern European languages spoken at home, and a third reported south-eastern or east Asian languages.

Nearly 75% of South Australian students came from Adelaide. Nearly 85% of students studied in the city with the remainder studying in rural centres.

The VET participation rate in South Australia was 12% - the second highest State participation rate in Australia. It was also higher than the 11% participation rate for Australia. Indicators such as module completion rates, VET pass rates and training completion rates show South Australia performed above the national rate by nine to 10 percentage points. However, this needs to be understood in the context of the State's higher proportion of short courses.

Over 80% of TAFE graduates in South Australia gave vocational reasons for undertaking study compared with 84% nationally. South Australian surveyed graduates reported high levels of satisfaction with the relevance of the course to their job (79%). Some 60% reported having benefited in some way such as an increase in earnings, a promotion or a change in job or new job.

Apprentices and trainees

In South Australia in 1997 there were 13,100 apprentices and trainees in training. This represented 8% of the number in Australia. Just under 60% of these were in the tradespersons occupation category, a lower proportion than the 70% in training in Australia. About one in five apprentices and trainees were women. Females accounted for 13% of apprentices and trainees in the tradespersons occupation category in South Australia, about the same as for Australia as a whole. Males outnumbered their female counterparts in most trade categories. They dominated the traditional trades such as metals, electrical, vehicles, with over 98% of the apprenticeships in each case. On the other hand, the numbers of women outstripped those for men in hairdressing (90%). The following table shows the numbers of apprentices and trainees by sex in the major trade categories.

Table 1: Tradespersons occupational category: apprentices and trainees in training in 1997 ('000)

Tradespersons occupational category	***Males***	***Females***	***Persons***
Metal Fitting & Machining Tradespersons	0.8	0.0	0.8
Other Metal Tradespersons	0.7	0.0	0.7
Electrical & Electronics Tradespersons	1.0	0.0	1.0
Building Tradespersons	0.9	0.0	1.0
Printing Tradespersons	0.2	0.0	0.2
Vehicle Tradespersons	1.4	0.0	1.4
Food Tradespersons	0.7	0.2	1.0
Amenity Horticultural Tradespersons	0.1	0.0	0.1
Miscellaneous Tradespersons (excluding hairdressers)	0.5	0.0	0.5
Hairdressers	0.0	0.6	0.7
Total in training	***6.7***	***1.0***	***7.7***

Source: NCVER apprentice and trainee data

Apprentices and trainees in the tradespersons categories in South Australia tended to be concentrated in the 19 to 21 year age group with 52% in this category, whereas for Australia as a whole, the pattern is more evenly spread across all age groups. Whilst females were more prevalent in non-trade apprenticeships and traineeships in South Australia, their participation was significantly less than for Australia as a whole. Only 31% of South Australian non-trade apprentices and trainees were female in contrast to an Australian figure of 46%. Women were both a majority of and concentrated in clerical,

sales and personal service traineeships. Males dominated the para-professional, plant and machine operating/driving, and labouring fields. The table below details the numbers of non-trades apprentices and trainees by sex.

Table 2: Non-trades apprentices and trainees in training in 1997 ('000)

Occupation category	*Males*	*Females*	*Persons*
Para-professionals	0.1	0.0	0.1
Clerks	0.3	0.8	1.1
Salespersons & Personal Service Workers	0.2	0.4	0.6
Plant & Machine Operators and Drivers	0.1	0.0	0.1
Labourers & Related Workers	2.9	0.4	3.4
Total in training	***3.6***	***1.6***	***5.2***

Source: NCVER apprentice and trainee data

Employment of TAFE graduates

Despite above-average unemployment in South Australia, 1997 South Australian graduates of longer TAFE courses fared relatively well in obtaining employment outcomes. Of those surveyed in 1997, 79% were employed in comparison to 71% nationally. A higher proportion were also in full-time work (55% compared with 47%) whilst the share in part-time employment was similar (19% compared with 20%). The percentage not in the labour force was lower at 9% compared with 14% nationally.

Indigenous graduates, whilst showing a lower proportion employed than non-indigenous graduates (70% compared with 79%) fared relatively better than those in other states. Nationally, 52% of indigenous graduates were in employment compared with 71% of non-indigenous graduates.

Results from the 1998 graduate destination survey showed that 81% of TAFE graduates completing their course in 1997 were employed when surveyed, compared with 58% of the Australian working population. 1997 TAFE graduates reported being happy with the quality and relevance of their courses with 68% reporting courses "good" (ranking it 8 or more on a ten point scale). Nearly 82% reported that they had studied for vocational reasons, and that their study had been relevant to their job. Nearly 40% reported changing jobs from labouring occupations to trades and related work.

The proportion of South Australian graduates undertaking further study was slightly below the national average (37% compared with 39% nationally). However, more of these students received recognition of prior learning (RPL) (42% compared with 40% nationally). TAFE was slightly less dominant as the main provider in South Australia than nationally (66% compared with 68%).

Employer satisfaction with VET

South Australian employers reported satisfaction with the VET system (84% rated satisfaction at 6 or higher on a 10 point scale) in contrast to 78% of employers nationally.

- They reported that they thought that training paid for itself through increased worker productivity (63%).
- They felt that graduates could work either with little or minimal supervision (71%).
- They also reported that course content was current, useable, relevant or at the leading edge (93%).

In addition, South Australian employers saw the assessment process as measuring skills relevant to the industry and relevant, rigorous and matching industry requirements (55%). They reported that institutions were flexible with courses (49%) or provided custom designed training (15%).

All these results were equal or above those reported nationally. South Australian employers were also cognisant of developments such as competency based training and recognition of prior learning in comparison to Australian employers generally.

Profile of South Australian students in vocational education and training

Age and Sex

Table 3 shows a breakdown of sex and age for the three groups of vocational students in South Australia which are the subject of this report: 141,500 students in the South Australian VET system, 5,900 graduates who responded to the 1998 TAFE graduate destination survey, and 13,100 apprentices and trainees. Figure 2 is a graphical presentation of the percentages shown in the table.

VET students in South Australia comprised a slightly higher proportion of female students than male students (53.0% and 47.0% respectively) which runs counter to the proportions of female and male VET students nationally (48% and 52% respectively). The higher proportion of female students is also reflected in the national figures in which South Australia, with only 8% of the Australian population, contributes 11% of the female VET student population. Predominant age groups for VET students were 25 to 39 years (36.3%) and 40 to 64 years (30.7%) which, when combined, represented just over two thirds of the South Australian VET student population.

The South Australian TAFE graduate population was fairly evenly divided between males and females (49.8% and 50.2% respectively). As was the case for for VET students, TAFE graduates were predominantly mature age students, although the predominant age groups extended further down to include 20 to 24 year olds. In fact, 89.0% of TAFE graduates lay within the ages 20 to 64 years.

Apprentice/trainee data show the traditional dominance of males (79.6%). As would be expected for this type of training, the predominant age groups were 15 to 19 years of age (38.8%) and 20 to 24 years of age (41.9 %) accounting for just over 80% of students in this group. Additional information from the national apprentice and trainee data collection provides figures for completions and commencements in 1997:

- In South Australia, approximately 4,500 apprentices and trainees, 76.4% of them males, completed their training in 1997. South Australian commencements in 1997 totalled 10,200, most of them (78.9%) being aged between 15 and 24 years.

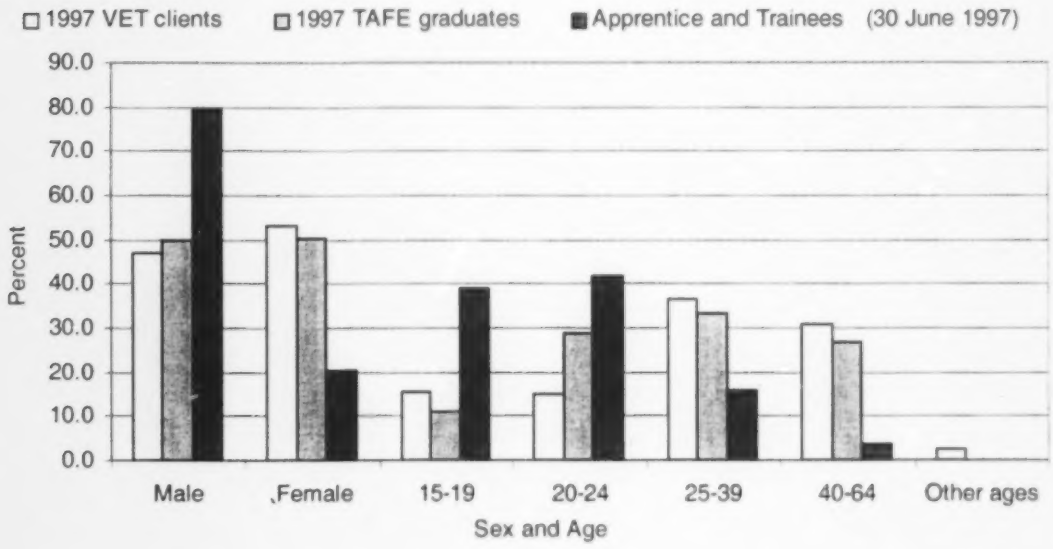
Table 3: Student categories by sex and age (Per cent)

	1997 VET students	***1997 TAFE graduates***	***Apprentices and Trainees (30 June 1997)***
Sex			
Male	47.0	49.8	79.6
Female	53.0	50.2	20.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number ('000)	141.5	5.9	13.1
Age			
15-19 years	15.2	11.1	38.8
20-24 years	15.2	29.0	41.9
25-39 years	36.3	33.3	15.8
40-64 years	30.7	26.7	3.5
Other ages	2.5	0.0	0.0
Total	***100.0***	***100.0***	***100.0***
Number ('000)	***141.5***	***5.9***	***13.1***

Note: some data in this table have been pro-rated to take account of missing or unknown data.
Source: NCVER data collections

- Male South Australian VET students represented about 9% of the national total of male VET students, and females correspondingly represented about 11%.
- For the TAFE graduate group, male graduates represented about 10% of the national total of male TAFE graduates, whilst the corresponding figure for females was about 8%.
- For the apprentice and trainee group, males represented about 8% of the national male apprentice/trainee total whilst females represented about 7%.

Figure 2: VET clients, TAFE graduates and apprentices and trainees in South Australia by sex and age (per cent)



Prior education

Table 4 shows prior education for the three groups of South Australian students covered by this report. It should be noted that the percentages for VET students and apprentice/trainees are based on data for approximately one third and one half of the total numbers in these groups. Because of the high proportions of students for whom results are not recorded, percentages shown in the table for these two groups should be used with caution.

Table 4: Students by prior educational attainment

	1997 VET students	*1997 TAFE graduates*	*Apprentices and trainees (30 June 1997)*
% of Number for which data are known	34.2	97.7	52.7
Prior education	**% of *known* data**		
No Prior Education	72.2	51.0	86.7
Prior Education Completed – certificate	27.5	27.5	13.3
Prior Education Completed – degree, diploma, other	0.3	21.5	0
Total	***100.0***	***100.0***	***100.0***
Number ('000)	***141.5***	***5.9***	***13.1***

Note: Percentages based on known responses only (that is, 'not known' data excluded).

72.2% of South Australian VET students for whom responses were known reported no prior education qualifications. This figure contrasts with the national average for VET students of 57.9%.

Combining the figures for the two levels of prior education completed (certificate and diploma, *et cetera*) shows that 49.0% of TAFE graduates have completed a prior education qualification. This is a

significantly higher proportion than the corresponding figures for VET students (27.8%) and apprentices and trainees (13.3%).

Looking solely at those students who had previously completed a qualification, a significant proportion of the TAFE graduate group (43.9%) had completed a degree or diploma, whereas for VET students who had previously completed a qualification the qualifications were almost entirely at certificate level.

Employment status

Table 5 shows the employment status of South Australian VET students during their course in 1997, and that of VET graduates around six months after completing their course. Figure 3, presents some of this information graphically.

Examination of the graph shows that TAFE graduates were more likely to be employed (81.8%) than those undertaking a VET course (66.2%). Interestingly, the 66.2% employment figure for VET students is considerably higher than the corresponding national average of 47.3%. However, it must be emphasised that the VET student percentages are based on only 39.6% of the VET student total.

A pattern of higher rates of employment for TAFE graduates is evident in most comparisons: TAFE graduates have a greater proportion employed on a full-time basis (TAFE graduates: 56.4%, VET students: 40.9%), and the proportion of TAFE graduates who were unemployed (9.9%) was less than half that of VET students (23.0%).

Information from the TAFE graduate survey showed that whilst 69.6% of TAFE graduates were employed before their course, 81.8% reported being employed after completing their course (at 29 May 1998). This represents an increase of 12.2 percentage points.

Table 5: Students by employment status

	1997 VET students	*1997 TAFE graduates*	*Apprentices and trainees (30 June 1997)*
% of Number for which data are known	39.6	99.8	100.0
Employment status*	**% of *known* data**		
Employed: full time	40.9	56.4	N/A
Employed: part time	17.2	19.7	N/A
Employed: other arrangement	8.1	5.7	N/A
Apprenticeship	N/A	N/A	100.0
Unemployed	23.0	9.9	N/A
Not in labour force	10.9	8.2	N/A
Total	***100.0***	***100.0***	***100.0***
Number ('000)	***141.5***	***5.9***	***13.1***

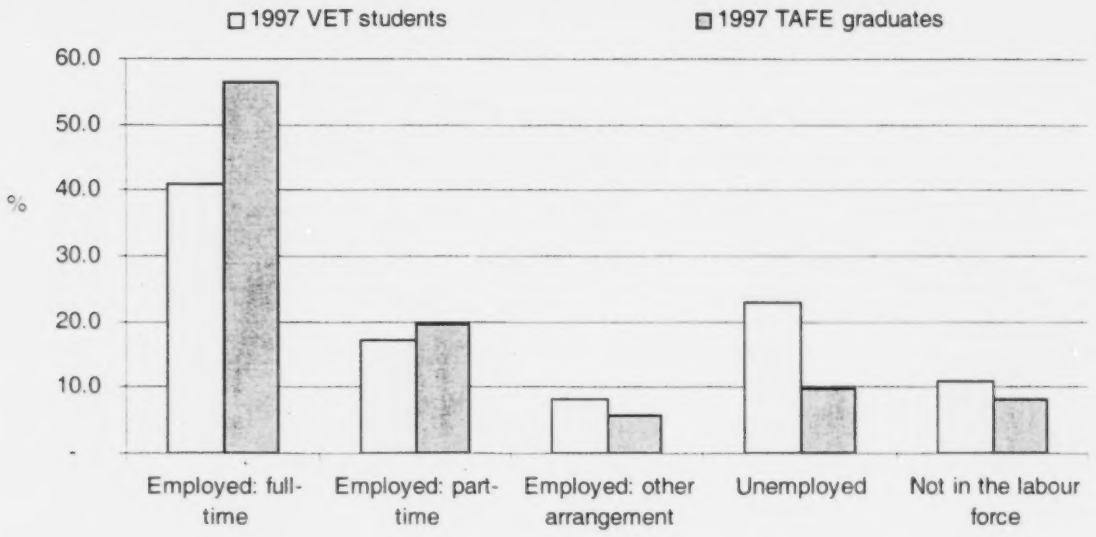
*During course for VET students, and as at 29 May 1998 for TAFE graduates.
Note: Percentages based on known responses only (that is, 'not known' data excluded).

Note: Reliability of data

Where data were not available for the entire population of particular categories (such as 1997 VET students in table 4), the percentages given in the tables are based on the total known cases rather than the total population. In effect, the known data become a sample of the population. In most cases, these 'sample' sizes remain quite large (for example, where data are known for 30% of the VET student group this still amounts to a sample size of more than 40,000 students). However, even with these large samples, there is a possibility that information may not have been provided for a particular sub-section of the student category thus leading to bias in the results. Results for partial populations therefore need to be treated with caution.

To remind the reader of this possibility, all tables containing results for partial categories also list, for each category, the respective proportions of the category population for which data are known. This has been shown as a percentage of 'Number' which is the total number of students in the category. So, in table 4, for example, the row titled '% of Number for which data are known' shows the sample size for the category '1997 VET students' to be 34.2% of the total number of VET students (meaning that results are unknown for 65.8% of the students). Corresponding percentages for '1997 TAFE graduates' and 'Apprentices and Trainees' are 97.7% and 52.7% respectively. In addition a note has been added at the foot of the affected tables stating that 'percentages are based on that portion of the number for which data are known'.

Figure 3: Labour force status of VET students and TAFE graduates, South Australia, 1997



Geographical region

Table 6 shows the geographical regions for the three groups of students reported on in this publication. About 70% of each of the three groups were Adelaide residents. Conversely, about a quarter of VET students (24.2%) and apprentices/trainees (24.4%) lived in rural areas. Data on rural residence were not specifically collected for TAFE graduates.

Table 6: Students by geographical region

	1997 VET students	*1997 TAFE graduates*[(a)]	*Apprentices and trainees (30 June 1997)*
% of Number for which data are known	83.5	100.0	100.0
Geographical region		**% of *known* data**	
Capital city	71.6	70.1	73.0
Other metropolitan/Other locations	0.1	29.9	0.0
Rural	24.2	Not available	24.4
Remote	2.9	Not available	2.3
Outside Australia/Interstate	1.2	Not available	0.3
Total	***100.0***	***100.0***	***100.0***
Number ('000)	***141.5***	***5.9***	***13.1***

Note: Percentages based on known responses only (that is, 'not known' data excluded).
(a) Categories for TAFE graduates are restricted to capital city and other locations.

Indigenous status

Table 7 shows indigenous status for students in the South Australian VET system.[1]

Based on the limited data available, it can be seen that proportions of indigenous students reported for the three groups covered in this publication range from 0.9% to 4.0%. Nationally, indigenous people

[1]For various reasons, people are sometimes reluctant to report indigenous origin, either not revealing they are indigenous or not responding at all. It is also possible that differences in the nature and context of questions regarding indigenous status put to the three groups could have had some bearing on the responses. In view of these factors, it is recommended that the figures stated for indigenous status be used with caution.

comprised approximately 2%[2] of the general population. Whilst the differences between these percentages are not great, it could be of interest that there were relatively fewer indigenous TAFE graduates.

Table 7: Students by indigenous status

	1997 VET students	*1997 TAFE graduates*	*Apprentices and trainees (30 June 1997)*
% of Number for which data are known	52.2	99.5	63.1
Indigenous status	**% of *known* data**		
Non indigenous	96.9	99.1	96.0
Indigenous	3.1	0.9	4.0
Total	***100.0***	***100.0***	***100.0***
Number ('000)	***141.5***	***5.9***	***13.1***

Note: Percentages based on known responses only (that is, 'not known' data excluded).

Disability

Table 8 shows disability status for students in the South Australian VET system.[3] Figure 4 presents some of this information graphically.

Of the students who responded to questions on disability, the great majority (between 93% and 98% across the three groups) indicated they did not have a disability. However, it should be noted that disability status was only indicated for 47.3% of VET students and 62.8% of apprentices and trainees. In the general population, approximately 18% indicated that they had a disability[4].

Table 8: Students by disability status

	1997 VET students	*1997 TAFE graduates*	*Apprentices and Trainees (30 June 1997)*
% of Number for which data are known	43.7	98.1	62.8
Disability status	**% of *known* data**		
Visual/sight disability	4.4	5.4	2.6
Other disability	0.9	1.0	0.0
No disability	94.7	93.6	97.4
Total	***100.0***	***100.0***	***100.0***
Number ('000)	***141.5***	***5.9***	***13.1***

Note: Percentages based on known responses only (that is, 'not known' data excluded).

Comparison of the percentages of those who reported on disability suggests there are fewer persons with a disability in apprenticeships and traineeships than in the other two groups. However, apart from the issue of missing responses mentioned earlier, it should also be borne in mind that, with average ages higher than for apprentices and trainees, students in the other two groups have had longer to develop a disability. It may therefore be unfair to suggest that the apprentice/traineeship sector is not doing as much to attract and cater for persons with disabilities.

The majority of disabilities reported appear to relate to vision or sight.

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[2]ABS, 1996 Census of Population and Housing: Selected Social and Housing Characteristics.

[3]For various reasons, people are sometimes reluctant to report a disability, either not revealing they have a disability or not responding at all. It is also possible that differences in the nature and context of questions regarding disability put to the three groups could have had some bearing on the responses. In view of these factors, it is recommended that the figures stated for disability be used with caution.

[4]ABS, 1993 Disability, Ageing and Carers Australia

School attendance status

Table 9 shows school attendance status for students in the South Australian VET system.[5]

On the available data it appears that 8.2% of South Australian VET students were attending secondary school whilst undertaking VET study. This was about twice the national average of around 4%. The figure of 4.3% for TAFE graduates was close to the national average of 4.8%.

Table 9: Students attending secondary school

	1997 VET students	*1997 TAFE graduates*	*Apprentices and Trainees (30 June 1997)*
% of Number for which data are known	41.2	99.1	Not applicable
School attendance	**% of *known* data**		
Still attending school	8.2	4.3	Not applicable
Finished full time schooling	91.8	95.7	Not applicable
Total	***100.0***	***100.0***	Not applicable
Number ('000)	***141.5***	***5.9***	***13.1***

Note: Percentages based on known responses only (that is, 'not known' data excluded).

Highest secondary school level completed

Table 10 shows the highest level of secondary schooling completed by students in the South Australian VET system.[6]

Table 10: Highest secondary school level completed

	1997 VET students	*1997 TAFE graduates*	*Apprentices and Trainees (30 June 1997)*
% of Number for which data are known	38.0	97.5	69.6
Highest level completed	**% of *known* data**		
Year 9 or lower	12.9	4.0	2.7
Year 10	16.3	13.7	13.9
Year 11	27.1	27.6	33.8
Year 12	43.7	54.7	49.6
Total	***100.0***	***100.0***	***100.0***
Number ('000)	***141.5***	***5.9***	***13.1***

Note: Percentages based on known responses only (that is, 'not known' data excluded).

For most secondary school years, there is a similar pattern across the three groups. The exception is Year 9 for which the percentage of VET students appears to be comparatively high (12.9%). This may be partly due to the fact that the VET student group contained a higher percentage of students still attending secondary school (some of whom could have been attending Year 9) than the other two groups (see preceding section).

Figure 4 provides a graphical presentation of the information on highest school level completed.

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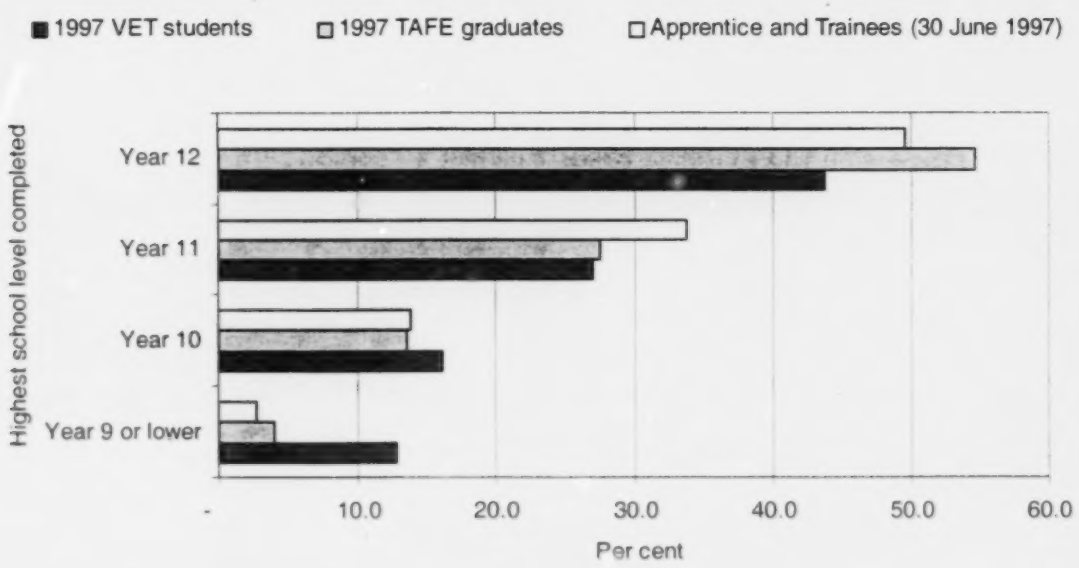
[5] Data on school attendance were only available for 44.2 % of the VET student population which may affect the reliability of the figures for this group.

[6] Data on highest level of schooling were available for only 38.0% of the VET student group and 69.6% of the apprentice/trainee group. The missing data could affect the reliability of the figures – especially in the case of the VET student group.

Figure 4: VET students, TAFE graduates and apprentices and trainees in South Australia by highest school level completed (per cent)



Reasons for undertaking a course

Respondents to the 1998 TAFE Graduate Destination Survey were asked to nominate their main reason for undertaking a course (table 11). For South Australian graduates, by far the most common reason chosen was 'To get a job or to own a business'. This accounted for more than a quarter of the total number of responses. This reason was more often chosen by younger people with 58.6% of the responses coming from 15 to 19 year olds, 35.3 % from 20 to 24 year olds, and 6.1% from those aged 25 years or more.

Table 11: Main reasons nominated by TAFE graduates for undertaking a course

	1997 TAFE graduates		
	Male	***Female***	***All***
% of Number for which data are known	99.1	98.8	99.1
Reason	**% of *known* data**		
To get a job (or own business)	26.0	28.4	27.2
It was a requirement of my job	21.6	10.8	16.2
To get a better job or promotion	15.8	14.8	15.3
To get extra skills for my job	15.3	14.2	14.7
To try for a different career	8.5	13.8	11.1
For interest or personal development	8.5	11.0	9.8
To get into another course of study	2.4	5.0	3.6
Other reasons	1.8	2.0	1.9
Total	***100.0***	***100.0***	***100.0***
Number ('000)	***2.9***	***3.0***	***5.9***

Note: Percentages based on known responses only (that is, 'not known' data excluded).

The next most common reason chosen was 'It was a requirement of the job'. This reason was twice as likely to be chosen by males than by females, and was most often chosen by people 20 to 24 years of age (28.2%), followed by people aged 40 years and over (15.6%).

Males strongly outnumber females in the case of only one reason 'It was a requirement of my job', chosen by 21.6% of males and 10.8% of females. There were three reasons for which there were strong differences in the other direction 'To try for a different career' (females 13.8%, males 8.5%), 'For

interest or personal development' (females 11.0%, males 8.5%) and 'To get into another course of study' (females 5.0%, males 2.4%).

Profile of vocational education and training undertaken in South Australia

Field of study

Table 12 shows the field of study for two of the groups of South Australian students covered by this report, namely, 1997 students in the VET system and respondents to the 1998 TAFE graduate destination survey.

South Australian male representation in VET course enrolments and TAFE graduates was significantly higher than percentages for females in three fields: engineering and surveying, architecture and building, and land and marine resources and animal husbandry. Females, on the other hand, were a significant majority both in VET course enrolments and TAFE graduations in four fields: arts, humanities and social sciences, business and administration, health and community services, and services, hospitality and transportation.

Table 12: VET course enrolments and TAFE graduates by field of study

Field of study	***1997 VET course enrolments***			***1997 TAFE graduates***		
	(% of column total)					
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
Land and marine resources, animal husbandry	6.6	2.5	4.6	7.6	3.3	5.4
Architecture, building	6.7	0.7	3.4	9.7	1.1	5.4
Arts, humanities and social sciences	3.5	8.3	5.1	2.6	7.8	5.2
Business, administration, economics	16.6	24.4	18.4	21.2	28.0	24.6
Education	2.7	2.3	2.2	7.7	6.1	6.9
Engineering, surveying	21.5	1.6	17.5	28.2	0.8	14.5
Health, community services	2.5	12.5	6.8	4.8	24.6	14.7
Law, legal studies	1.3	0.7	0.9	2.4	1.3	1.8
Science	4.1	2.9	3.1	3.3	2.3	2.8
Veterinary science, animal care	0.0	0.4	0.2	0.0	0.8	0.4
Services, hospitality, transportation	8.0	12.3	9.2	9.1	19.6	14.4
VET multi-field education	26.5	31.3	28.7	3.5	4.2	3.9
Total	***100***	***100***	***100***	***100***	***100***	***100***
Number ('000)	***66.5***	***66.1***	***154.6***	***2.9***	***3.0***	***5.9***

When overall percentages (male plus female) for the various fields were compared with corresponding national percentages, the South Australian figures were notably above the national averages in several fields.

In *Engineering surveying*, VET enrolments, at 17.5%, exceeded the national average of 14.0%. This could be a reflection of the importance of the vehicle manufacturing industry to this state, an importance which is underscored by the fact that 40.9% of South Australian apprentices and trainees are employed in manufacturing industries. For TAFE graduates, on the other hand, there was little difference between the South Australian and national percentages (14.5% and 14.9% respectively).

The percentage of South Australian VET students was significantly above the national percentage in VET multi-field education (South Australia 28.7%, national 18.8%). For TAFE graduates in this field, the South Australian percentage was less than the national average (South Australia 3.9%, national 8.2%). Also, both graduate percentages were considerably lower than those for VET students.

In business, administration, and economics, the South Australian percentages for both VET students and TAFE graduates were below the national percentages. For VET students, the figures were South Australia 18.4%, national 20.2%, and for TAFE graduates, South Australia 24.6%, national: 28.0%.

Apprentices and trainees

As at 30 June 1997, South Australian apprentices and trainees represented 7.4% of the national total. Significant differences between South Australian and national figures were found for several industries.

In South Australia, 40.9% of all apprentices and trainees were in the manufacturing industry whereas nationally, this industry represented only 11.1% of the total. Although only 4.1% of the South Australian total, agriculture, forestry and fishing, was four times the national average of 1.0%. These two differences reflect the importance of these industries to South Australia, particularly the vehicle manufacturing sector and specialist areas in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, such as dry land farming, wine industry and aquaculture. Other South Australian industries which were above the national average were government administration and defence, and personal and other services. Both of these, as will be seen below, employed very high percentages of female apprentices and trainees.

Table 13 shows the percentages of apprentices and trainees in training in South Australia as at 30 June 1997 by industry and by sex. The industries are listed in order of overall percentage of the South Australian apprentice/trainee population. A graphical presentation of some of this information is given in figure 5.

Table 13: Apprentices and trainees in training by industry and sex

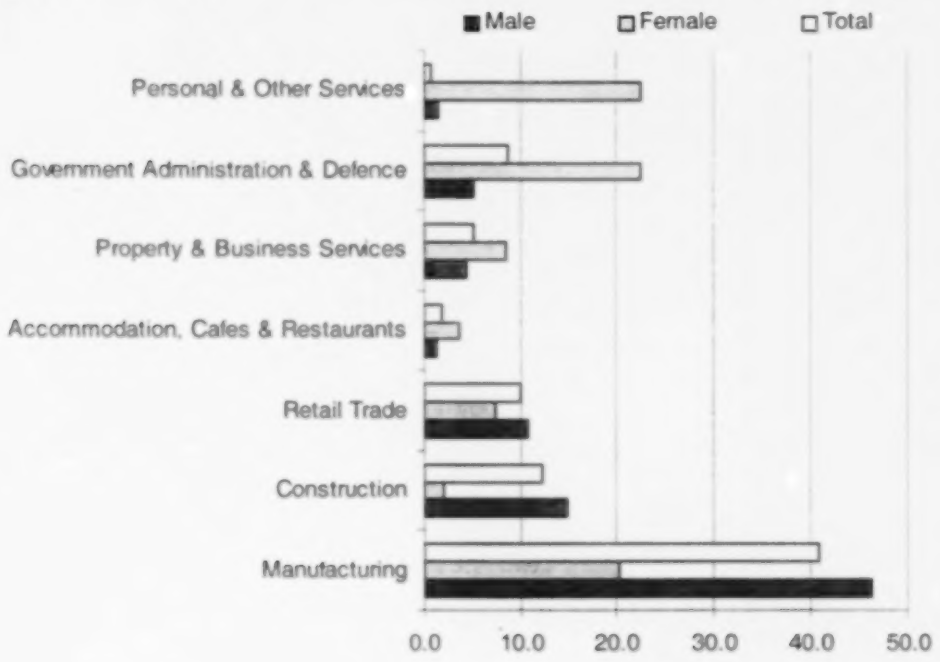
Industry	*Male*	*Female*	*All*
	(% of column total)		
Manufacturing	46.2	20.3	40.9
Construction	14.9	2.0	12.3
Retail trade	10.8	7.4	10.1
Goverment administration, defence	5.3	22.5	8.8
Personal and other Services	1.4	22.5	5.7
Property and business services	4.5	8.6	5.3
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	4.3	2.9	4.1
Transport and storage	3.6	0.5	2.9
Electricity, gas, water supply	2.3	0.1	1.9
Accommodation, cafes and restaurants	1.3	3.7	1.8
Education	0.9	3.0	1.3
Wholesale trade	1.1	1.4	1.2
Health, community services	0.8	1.7	0.9
Cultural and recreational Services	0.5	1.8	0.8
Mining	0.5	0.2	0.4
Communication services	0.1	0.3	0.1
Finance and insurance	0.1	0.5	0.1
Undefined	1.3	0.9	1.2
Total	***100.0***	***100.0***	***100.0***
Number ('000)	***10.4***	***2.7***	***13.1***

Inspection of the table shows that the three industries manufacturing, construction, and retail trade, together accounted for just under two thirds (63.3%) of the South Australian apprentice and trainee population. The bulk of male apprentices and trainees (71.9%) were also found in these three industries. The three industries government administration and defence, personal and other services, and manufacturing, accounted for a majority (65.3%) of female apprentices and trainees.

Other industries not mentioned above in which gender ratios were greater than 3:1 were education; cultural and recreational services; communication services; and finance and insurance, where females exceeded males, and transport and storage where males exceeded females.

Figure 5 shows the percentage of apprentices and trainees in training by industry by sex.

Figure 5: Apprentices and trainees in training in South Australia by industry by sex (per cent)



Area of learning

Table 14 shows South Australian VET module enrolments by area of learning and sex. The four most popular areas of learning: administration, business, economics and law; social, educational & employment skills; mathematics and computing; and engineering, processing; accounted for almost 60% of total module enrolments in South Australia. A comparison of South Australian percentages of total enrolments for these four areas with corresponding national figures showed variations of less than 2% for all but social, educational and employment skills. Respective state and national figures for the four areas were: administration, business, economics and law, South Australia 18.3%, national 20.2%; social, educational and employment skills, 16.1% and 12.3%; mathematics and computing, 13.9% and 13.2%; and engineering and processing, 10.8% and 12.4%.

For males in South Australia, high proportions of enrolments were in engineering and processing (19.0% of all male enrolments); mathematics and computing (15.0%); administration, business, economics and law (14.1%); and social, educational and employment skills (13.8%).

For females, high proportions of enrolments were in administration, business, economics and law (23.0%); social, educational and employment skills (17.6%); mathematics and computing (13.6%); hospitality, tourism and personal services (12.0%); and health sciences (11.1%).

Areas in which gender balances were most disproportionate (ratio greater than 2:1) were engineering and processing (5.8 males to each female); agriculture and renewable resources (2.8 males to each female); and health sciences (2.4 females to each male).

Table 14: South Australian VET module enrolments by area of learning and sex

Area of learning	*Male*	*Female*	*All*
	(% of column total)		
Administration, business, economics and law	14.1	23.0	18.3
Social, educational and employment skills	13.8	17.6	16.1
Mathematics, computing	15.0	13.6	13.9
Engineering and processing	19.0	3.3	10.8
Hospitality, tourism and personal services	7.3	12.0	9.4
Health sciences	4.7	11.1	7.7
Humanities	5.6	8.1	6.6
Agriculture, renewable resources	8.8	3.2	5.9
Built environment	6.4	1.1	3.6
Visual and performing arts	2.7	4.5	3.5
Sciences	2.2	1.2	3.2
Social studies	0.3	1.1	0.7
Education	0.3	0.2	0.2
Total	***100.0***	***100.0***	***100.0***
Number ('000)	***341.5***	***344.7***	***708.3***

Qualification level

Table 15 shows the qualification and level of course for VET students and for respondents to the 1998 TAFE Graduate Destination Survey in South Australia.

Course enrolments for South Australian VET students comprised 8.4% of the national total. South Australian TAFE graduate enrolments were 8.8% of the national total of graduates who responded to the 1998 TAFE Graduate Destination Survey.

Table 15: VET course enrolments and TAFE graduates by qualification level

Qualification category	*1997 VET enrolments (all)*	*1997 VET enrolments excluding Non-award courses)*	*1997 TAFE graduates*
	(% of column total)		
Diplomas	8.2	16.9	15.4
AQF – Certificate IV & equivalent	10.3	21.2	24.5
AQF – Certificate III & equivalent	11.5	23.7	28.9
AQF – Certificate I & II	6.8	14.0	8.1
Other certificates, endorsements	11.8	24.3	23.1
Statements of Attainment	NA	NA	NA
Non-award Courses	51.4	–	NA
Total	***100.0***	***100.0***	***100.0***
Number ('000)	***154.6***	***75.1***	***5.9***

Data in the table show that the majority of VET course enrolments (51.4%) were in non-award courses. This result, in combination with the percentages for other certificates and endorsements (VET students: 11.8% and TAFE graduates: 23.1%) suggest that a considerable proportion of enrolments in vocational education and training were for the purpose of upgrading and enhancing skills.

The apparent high proportions of TAFE graduate enrolments in diplomas, AQF certificate IV, AQF certificate III, and their equivalents in comparison with the VET student group are due to the absence of non-award courses in the TAFE graduate percentages. If non-award courses are removed from the VET student total, most of the remaining percentages correspond more closely (the notable exception being

AQF certificates I & II, for which the adjusted percentage becomes 14.0%, which is markedly greater than the 8.1% for TAFE graduates).

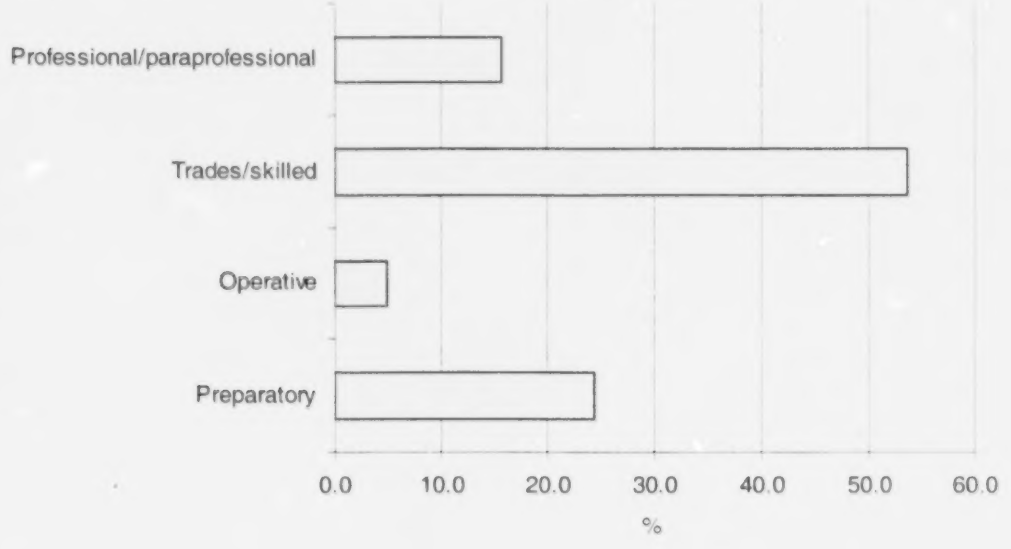
It should be noted that the great majority of apprentices undertook courses at AQF Certificate III and equivalent (11.5% of VET student enrolments (or 23.7% adjusted as above), and 28.9% of TAFE graduates).

Annual hours

Figure 6 shows the percentage of total annual hours by stream of study. The total of all South Australian VET module hours was 19,790,600. Of these, more than half (53.7%) were in the trade/skilled stream and almost a quarter (24.4%) were in the preparatory stream. Professional/para-professional courses accounted for a further 15.7% and 4.9% were in the operative stream.

Males tended to undertake longer modules than females (166 hours compared with 135 hours). Analysis of module hours by age showed the average module hours to be greatest for the 15 to 19 year age group at 226 hours per person.

Figure 6: Total annual hours in South Australia by stream (per cent)



Module outcomes

Summary of module outcomes

Calculation of module completion rates

In the accompanying discussion of module completion rates, continuing enrolments were treated as non-completions, although some do eventually result in a successful module completion. The formula used for estimating the module completion rate was:

$$\text{Module completion rate (\%)} = \frac{\text{Passes + Modules for which class hours are completed}}{\text{Total known outcomes}} \times 100$$

Module enrolments for which the outcome was not available were excluded from the calculations.

In 1997 the 141,500 students undertaking publicly-funded VET in South Australia had a total of 708,300 enrolments in modules (subjects). The overall pattern of module outcomes is shown in table 16. It is important to note that:

- 4.0% of the known outcomes category were modules in which the student is continuing studies into the next year.
- For 1997, a module outcome was not available for a small number of the enrolments (8.4% of the overall total). Further development of data collection arrangements in South Australia will reduce this in future years.
- A proportion of the continuing and unknown-outcome enrolments will result in a successful outcome in a future year.

As in other States and Territories, a successful module outcome can be achieved in a number of different ways. These alternative pathways are treated as equivalent when determining eligibility for recognised qualifications.

The great majority of modules and module enrolments in South Australia require an assessment for successful completion. In 1997, 67,600 students passed the assessment or demonstrated the required competencies in at least one module. This mode of completion comprised 70.4% of the total known outcomes.

Table 16: VET student module enrolments and outcomes, 1997

	Known outcomes	*All outcomes*	*Students*
Module outcome	*% of Number*		
Completed: Assessed as pass	70.4	64.5	46.4
Completed: Class hours	7.9	7.2	19.4
Completed: Recognition of Prior Learning	6.5	6.0	4.5
Completed: Credit transfer	0.3	0.3	0.6
Not completed: Continuing with studies	4.0	3.7	6.3
Not completed: Assessed as fail or withheld	6.1	5.6	8.2
Not completed: Withdrew	4.7	4.3	7.9
Total known outcomes	100.0	91.6	—
Outcome not known		8.4	31.9
Total module enrolments		100.0	125.2*
Number ('000)	648.7	708.3	141.5

*The percentages in this column add to more than 100 because some students have results in more than one module outcome category.

For non-assessed modules (for example, work experience modules and modules undertaken by 'observers') students successfully complete the module by participating in the required activities. This

mode comprised 7.9% of the known outcomes in 1997, with 27,500 students completing subjects of this kind.

Just over 70% of known outcomes were completed by successful assessment. Of the remainder, almost 7% were completed through recognition of prior learning (6.5%) or credit transfer (0.3%) and 10.8% were unsuccessfully attempted (recorded as failures, withheld results or withdrawals).

The funding formula for South Australian TAFE institutes, the major providers of VET in the State, includes a component for successful module completions. As a consequence, TAFE providers have a strong incentive to ensure that students successfully complete the modules they undertake, for example, by provision of tutorials and other forms of special assistance where appropriate. This may be a contributing factor to the low percentage of unsuccessful module attempts.

Completions through status or credit

Formal recognition of knowledge or skills acquired elsewhere is an important policy objective of the Australian VET system.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) and Credit transfer

RPL is status or credit granted on the basis of verifiable prior acquisition of skills and knowledge through work and life experiences. The learning may be formal, but is often of an informal nature and is generally acquired over a long term. An example of RPL would be status given in a computing module for knowledge and skills learned through use of computers on the job or as a hobby.

Credit transfer is granted for equivalent subjects which have been successfully completed at another education or training institution (for example, subjects completed at secondary school as part of the South Australian Certificate of Education which are recognised by TAFE in South Australia).

In 1997, 6,400 South Australian VET students were granted status or credit through recognition of prior learning (RPL), totalling 42,200 module enrolments. This represents 6.5% of the known module outcomes.

In the same year, 900 students were granted status or credit through credit transfer arrangements representing 0.3% of the known outcomes in 1997 (this is below the national rate of 3.6%).

Table 17 shows status and credit outcomes for VET students by age and sex. Looking at gender balance in table 17 it can be seen that the general patterns of outcomes for RPL are similar for males and females. For credit transfer however, outcomes for females are approximately double those for males.

Table 17: Outcomes of status or credit for VET students, by age and sex, 1997

	RPL outcomes			*Credit transfer outcomes*		
Age	***Females***	***Males***	***Total***	***Females***	***Males***	***Total***
	% of *known* module outcomes					
15-19 years	1.1	0.8	1.0	0.3	0.1	0.2
20-24 years	4.0	4.0	4.0	0.8	0.3	0.5
25-39 years	8.3	10.1	9.2	0.5	0.2	0.4
40-64 years	12.0	14.8	13.3	0.4	0.2	0.3
Other	3.9	5.9	4.8	0.0	0.1	0.0
All ages	6.4	6.7	6.5	0.5	0.2	0.3
Number ('000):						
Modules	20.3	21.9	42.2	1.5	0.7	2.2
Students	3.2	3.2	6.4	0.6	0.3	0.9

Analysing outcomes by age shows, as expected, the proportion of RPL outcomes increased with age, both for male and female VET students. However, for credit transfer, outcomes were distributed more uniformly across the age groups but with some prominence amongst females aged 20 to 39.

Analysis of completion rates for specific groups

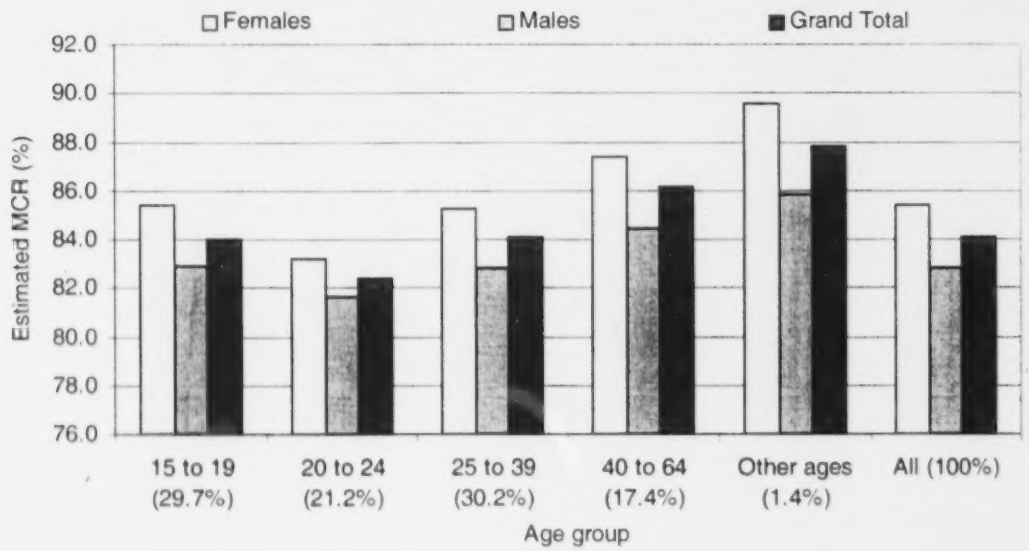
Ideally, the proportion of modules successfully completed should be reasonably constant irrespective of the programme of training or the students undertaking it. In reality, the ability and motivation of students varies, as do the demands of the programme being undertaken, and even the quality of teaching and learning support. Estimated module completion rates for 1997 were found to vary across a range of student and programme variables, a few of which are considered in this section.

Age and sex

Figure 7 shows the estimated module completion rates for South Australian VET students by age and sex. The estimated overall module completion rate was slightly lower for males than for females (82.8% and 85.4%, respectively).

A similar trend was generally observed across all age groups. Students aged 20 to 24 had the lowest completion rate of any age group (82.4%), although the female-male difference of 1.7 percentage points was slightly less than for other age groups.

Figure 7: Estimated module completion rate in South Australia by age and sex



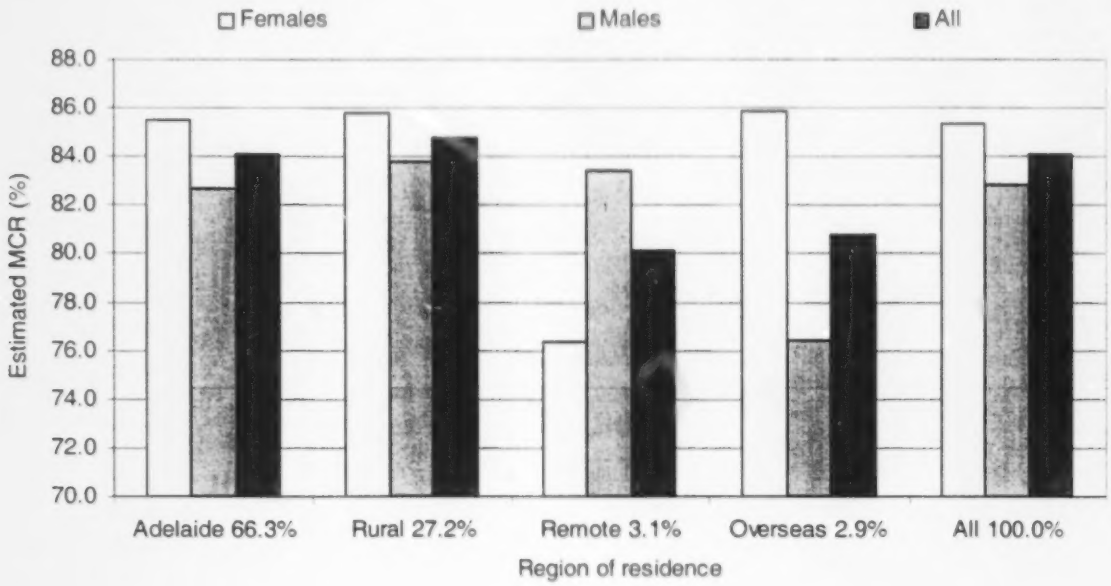
Regional groups

Figure 8 shows the estimated module completion rates for South Australian VET students by region of residence and sex. As shown, VET students living in or near Adelaide accounted for the majority of training activity, with 66.3% of known module outcomes. Students in rural centres (population of 5,000 or more) accounted for a further 27.2% of module outcomes, and those from remote areas, another 3.1%. Students whose permanent address was overseas accounted for a further 2.9% of known outcomes. These were mainly overseas full-fee paying students studying in South Australia under specific visa arrangements.

For students in metropolitan and rural areas, the completion rates and the male-female differences were close to the overall State patterns. However, for students in remote areas, the estimated module completion rate was 4.0 percentage points below the State rate, and the rate for females was 7.0 percentage points below that for males. Module outcomes for indigenous students appeared to contribute to the lower completion rates for this group (see 'Indigenous groups' below).

For female overseas students, the estimated module completion rate (85.8%) was close to the State rate for females (85.4%). By contrast, the rate for male overseas students (76.4%) was 6.4 percentage points below the State rate for males (82.8%).

Figure 8: Estimated module completion rate in South Australia by region of residence and sex



Indigenous groups

Many of the vocational education and training programmes, including access and equity programmes, at State, local and Commonwealth levels are designed to meet the needs of indigenous Australians. In South Australia, 1.6% of the students undertaking vocational education and training indicated that they were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin, which is below the national rate of 3.4%. Unreported indigenous status may cause the number of indigenous VET students to be understated for South Australia.

Indigenous students accounted for a somewhat higher proportion of known module outcomes (2.9% in 1997), and these students were much more likely to be living in rural and remote areas, particularly the latter.

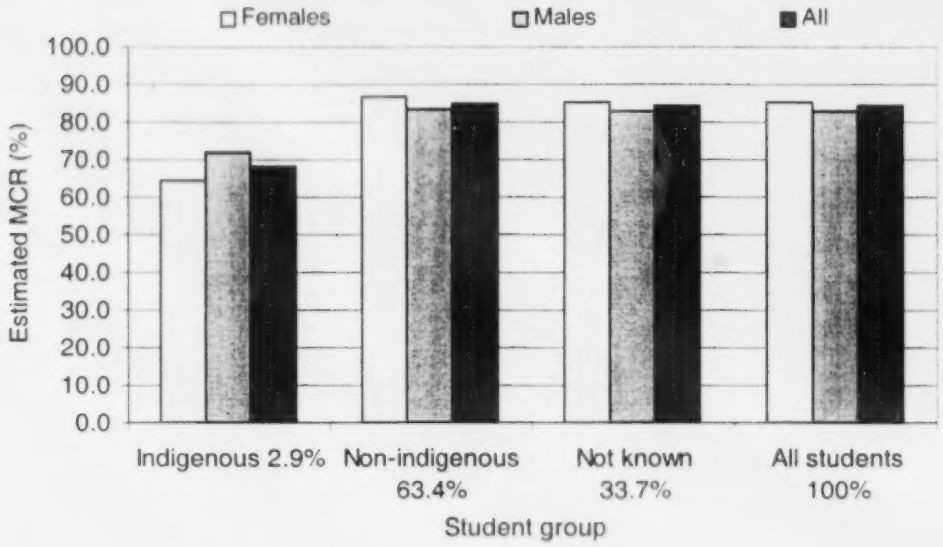
Figure 9 shows the estimated module completion rates for indigenous South Australian VET students by sex.

The estimated module completion rate for indigenous students in 1997 was 67.9%, which was 16.1 percentage points below the overall State rate. Because indigenous students accounted for a relatively small proportion of module enrolments, the net effect on the overall module completion rate for the State was slight.

For female indigenous students, the completion rate was 7.9 percentage points below that for males. This was the opposite of the overall State pattern, where the completion rate for females was almost 2.5 percentage points higher than for males.

Indigenous students were more likely to delay completion and continue their studies into the following year. In 1997, 18.4% of the known module outcomes for indigenous students were expected to continue into 1998, which contrasts strongly with the overall rate of 6.1%. The rate for indigenous females, at 22.5%, was even higher. The high proportion of continuing enrolments could have contributed to the below-average completion rate for indigenous students, particularly females.

Figure 9: Estimated module completion rate in South Australia for indigenous students by sex



School leavers and students in secondary school

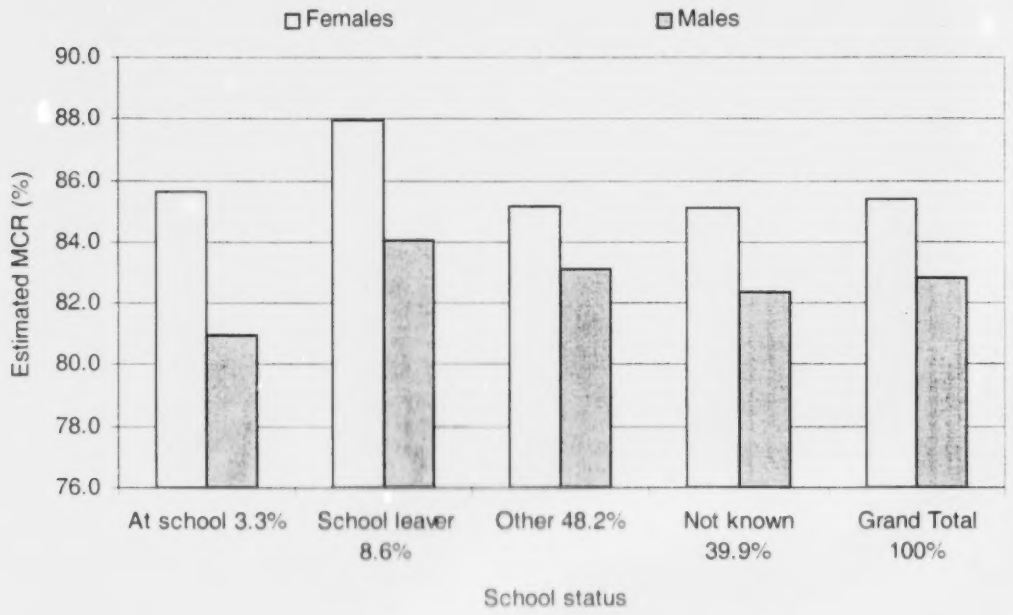
In South Australia, school leavers accounted for 8.6% of module outcomes in 1997, whilst students still at secondary school accounted for a further 3.3%[7]. The latter group included students involved in the pilot VET-in-schools programme, funded by ANTA with supplementary funding in South Australia from State VET allocations. Outcomes for students still at school will become more important in the future with the further development by States and Territories of the VET-in-schools programmes.

Figure 10 shows the estimated module completion rates in South Australia for school leavers and students still in school by sex. For VET students still attending secondary school the module completion rate of 83.0% was marginally below the State rate of 84.1%, but with a larger than average gender difference in favour of females (4.7% in contrast to 2.5% for all students).

For school leavers on the other hand, the module completion rate of 85.9% was above the overall State rate, again with a relatively large difference in favour of females (4.0%).

[7] The base for these percentages excludes RPL, credit transfer and unknown module outcomes. These figures are likely to understate the actual level of school leaver and school student participation in VET because of the large number of clients whose school status is unknown.

Figure 10: Estimated module completion rate in South Australia for school leavers and students still at school by sex



Students with a disability

Table 18 shows module completion rates by sex for South Australian VET students who reported a disability.

In 1997, 3.2% of known module outcomes were for students who reported a disability which they considered significant or permanent. As with indigenous status, unreported information may cause this proportion to be understated.

For students who reported a disability, the estimated completion rate was 6.1 % below that reported by students with no disability and 5.5 percentage points below the overall State average. However, there was less difference between males and females (0.9% in favour of females for students with disability compared with 2.7% in favour of females for students with no disability).

Table 18: Module completion rates for students reporting a disability, by sex, 1997

Disability status	***Females***	***Males***	***All students***	***% of all module outcomes***
Disability	79.1	78.2	78.6	3.2
No disability	86.1	83.4	84.7	63.9
Disability status not known	84.5	82.2	83.4	32.9
All students	***85.4***	***82.8***	***84.1***	***100.0***

Analysis of completion rates by learning programme variables

Module completion rates were found to vary according to level of qualification, field of study and area of learning.

Qualification level

Table 19 shows estimated module completion rates by course type, level and sex. Levels quoted are based on the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

Module completion rates for courses at AQF levels I to IV ranged progressively upward from 71.9% for all students at AQF level I, to 87.3% at AQF level IV. For AQF other and diploma and above, the rates were around 81% which was slightly below the State average of 84.1% for all courses.

Courses in the 'Other recognised qualifications' category (which includes courses under 50 hours certificates of proficiency and endorsements to certificates) had the highest module completion rate at over 87.5%. Because this category accounted for just over a quarter (26.1%) of the known module outcomes, the effect is to raise the overall State completion rate by 1.4 percentage points.

Comparing completion rates by sex shows females completed at a higher rate than males across all qualification categories. The differences ranged from 0.4 percentage points for AQF III courses, which includes the courses generally taken by traditional apprentices, up to 7.3 percentage points for courses at Diploma and above.

Table 19: Estimated module completion rate by course AQF level and sex, 1997

AQF level	*Females*	*Males*	*All students*	*% of total*
AQF or equivalent:				
AQF I	73.5	70.5	71.9	4.4
AQF II	82.8	81.2	82.1	8.1
AQF III	84.5	84.1	84.3	23.3
AQF IV	87.9	86.7	87.3	12.3
AQF other	83.7	79.3	81.2	10.6
Diploma and above	84.3	77.0	80.9	15.2
Other recognised qualifications:				
Other	88.2	86.8	87.5	24.5
Under 50 hours	97.4	95.3	96.5	1.6
Total – all courses	***85.4***	***82.8***	***84.1***	***100.0***

Field of study

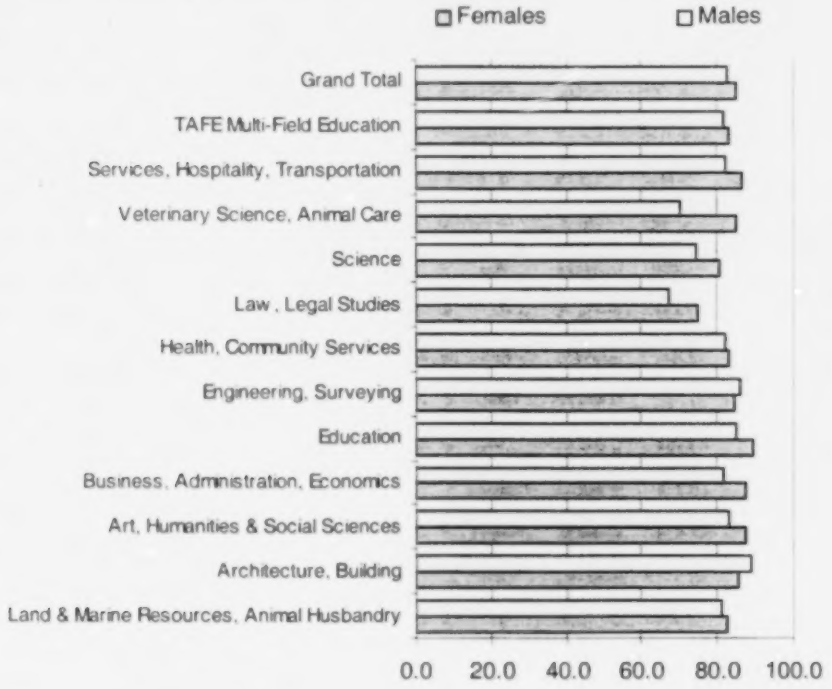
Figure 11 shows estimated module completion rates in South Australia by field of study and sex. Field of study provides information about the major content of a course. Overall estimated module completion rates (both sexes combined) ranged from a high of 88.5% to a low of 70.9%, a difference of 17.6 percentage points.

The high rate of 88.5% was for architecture and building. This was 4.4% above the State average of 84.1% for all fields. Architecture and building accounted for 4.7% of total known module outcomes. The estimated completion rate was considerably below the State rate in two fields, namely, law and legal studies at 70.9% (13.2% below the 84.1% State average), and Science at 76.6% (7.5% below the State average). The field of science includes the important computing science and information technology courses. Because these two fields accounted for less than 7.0% of known outcomes, they did not materially affect the State completion rate.

Inspection of figure 11 shows that females completed at a higher rate than males in all but two fields of study, namely, architecture and building (3.3% in favour of males) and engineering and surveying (1.6% in favour of males). The difference in the completion rate for males and females was greatest in the field of veterinary science and animal care where it was 14.7% in favour of females.

The significant variations in completion rates across the fields of study suggest that field of study is an important factor in determining module completions. Furthermore, the difference in favour of females in 10 of the 12 fields of study, and the magnitude of some of the differences could also be an issue of interest.

Figure 11: Estimated module completion rate in South Australia by field of study and sex (per cent)



Area of learning

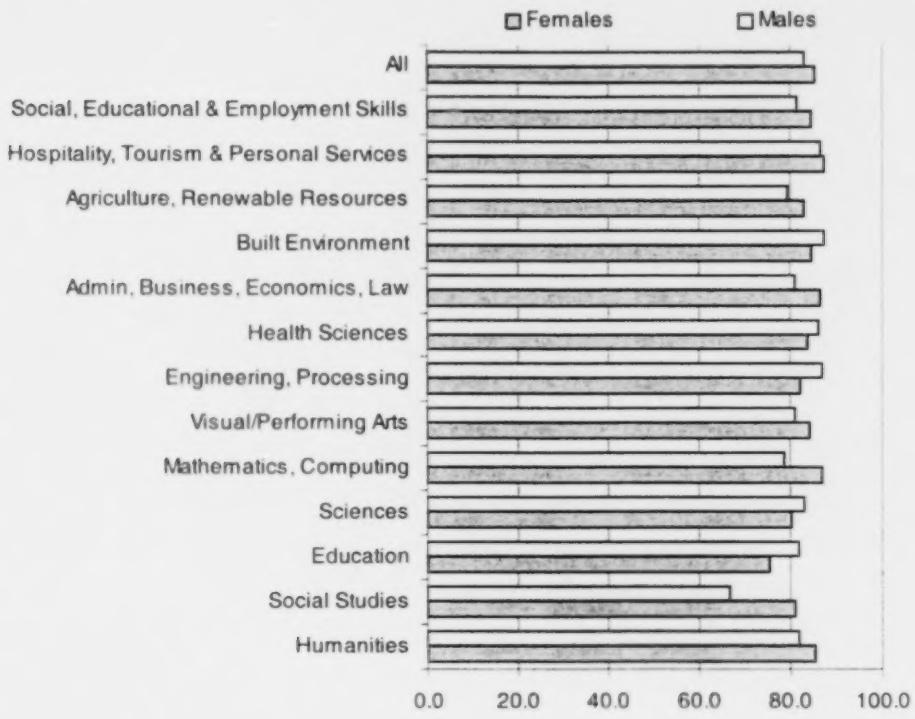
Area of learning provides information about the content of the modules undertaken. Although area of learning is independent of the course in which a module is undertaken, some areas of learning are more likely to be associated with certain fields of study than others. Figure 12 shows estimated module completion rates in South Australia by area of learning and sex.

Overall estimated module completion rates (both sexes combined) ranged from a high of 87.0% to a low of 77.9%. Highest were the areas of hospitality, tourism and personal services and built environment, both with a combined completion rate of 87.0%, which was 2.9% above the State average of 84.1% for all areas of learning. Together, these two areas represented 13.7% of all known module outcomes. Lowest module completion rates were those for the areas of social studies (77.9%); education (79.3%); and agriculture and renewable resources (80.3%). These three areas combined represented 9.0% of all known module outcomes.

As was the case in the previous section *Field of study*, females generally had higher completion rates than males, exceeding that of males in nine of the 13 areas of learning. However, across the 13 categories there was less variation in completion rates than was found for field of study (79.3 to 87.0% for areas of learning, 70.9 to 88.5% for fields of study).

The difference between female and male module completion rates was greatest in social studies (14.4% in favour of females) and mathematics and computing (8.3% in favour of females). Male-female differences in the opposite direction were fewer and less extreme, ranging up to 6.4% in favour of males in education and 4.9% in engineering and processing modules.

Figure 12: Estimated module completion rate in South Australia by area of learning and sex



Conclusions regarding module completions

It will be clear from this brief discussion that a very complex set of factors underlies the completion patterns achieved by VET students in South Australia, with many potential factors not considered at all in this report.

What can be concluded, however, is that for a majority of student groups module completion rates are high, and those factors which do appear to influence completion rates do so at the margins or generally affect a relatively small proportion of students and training activity.

Completion of qualification as course outcome

Course completions

As in other States and Territories, a majority of vocational education and training students in South Australia undertake a relatively small number of modules and do not seek a formal qualification. However, a proportion of students complete a recognised qualification.

In South Australia the formal testamur is generally issued in response to an application by the student. Some students may complete the requirements of a recognised qualification but do not apply for the testamur. In 1996, almost 15,000 recognised qualifications were issued. Figures for 1996 are summarised in table 20, which also includes data for 1997.

The data in table 20 show that the largest single qualification category in 1996 was AQF level unknown at 41.8% of all AQF and equivalent qualifications. These are older RATE (Register of Awards in Tertiary Education) certificates, usually at AQF II to IV level, for which the exact equivalent in the AQF is not available. However, inspection of the figures for 1997 show that the proportion for AQF

level unknown had dropped to 22.3%, suggesting the relative importance of this category is declining as older RATE courses are replaced by courses leading to AQF qualifications.

The next largest category was AQF Certificate III and RATE equivalents which represented 22.2% of all AQF and equivalent qualifications in 1996. This category includes the qualifications undertaken by traditional apprentices. The proportion for this category in 1997 increased to 29.7% suggesting it could be increasing in importance relative to some of the others.

At the highest levels, diploma and higher level qualifications (both AQF and RATE) accounted for 14.8% of AQF and equivalent qualifications issued in 1996. Interestingly, the data for 1997 shows a slight drop in proportion for this category to 13.2%.

Also at the higher levels, AQF Certificate IV and equivalent accounted for a further 16.4% with an increase to around 22.9% in 1997.

Qualifications at AQF Certificate I and II level, which include many pre-vocational and preparatory courses and courses undertaken by many trainees, both increased in relative importance from 1996 to 1997.

Outside of AQF and equivalent qualifications, there appears to have been a startling increase in short courses of under 50 hours (3.7% of all qualifications in 1996 to 31.5% in 1997).

Table 20: VET qualifications completed and issued, 1996 and 1997

AQF level	*1996*		*1997**	
AQF and equivalent qualifications:	***% of all AQF and equivalents***	***% of all qualifications***	***% of all AQF and equivalents***	***% of all qualifications***
AQF Certificate I	1.3		4.2	
AQF Certificate II	3.6		7.7	
AQF Certificate III	22.2		29.7	
AQF Certificate IV	16.4		22.9	
AQF level unknown	41.8		22.3	
Diploma and higher	14.8		13.2	
All AQF and equivalents	100.0	96.0	100.0	62.9
Statement of attainment		0.0		3.0
Other recognised qualifications		0.3		5.6
Short courses (under 50 hours)		3.7		31.5
Total (%)		100.0		100.0
Total number of qualifications issued	11,893	12,393	12,706	20,214

*Some qualifications completed in 1997 have not as yet been reported to the national database but will be included in the collection of 1998 data from VET providers.

Apprentice and trainee completions

During 1997, almost 24,900 persons were involved in an apprenticeship or traineeship and of these, 13,800 were still in training at the end of 1997, an increase of almost 35.2% on the previous year. Completions for the year totalled 3,450. Of these, 48.4% were in occupations in the trades and related workers group, reflecting the State's manufacturing base, 28.5% were in the intermediate clerical, sales and service workers group, and a further 10.6% were in the labourers and related workers group. Each successful completion of an apprenticeship or traineeship includes the completion of a recognised qualification, usually at a South Australian TAFE institute, in order to fulfil the off-the-job requirements of the contract.

Of the respondents to the 1998 TAFE Graduate Destination Survey, 14.5% indicated that they had income from an apprenticeship or a traineeship whilst undertaking the course that they completed in 1997.

Of the survey respondents who were in an apprenticeship whilst undertaking their course, 70.7% were still employed with the same employer at 29 May 1998. This contrasted with the corresponding figure of 50.7% for students who were employed as trainees. A further 25.2% of apprentice respondents and 33.8% of trainee respondents were employed with a different employer[8].

The Graduate Destination Survey results also indicated that 93.4% of apprentice respondents were in paid employment at 29 May 1998, in contrast to 88.6% for trainees.

Relationships between courses and occupations

Occupational destinations of graduates

The 1997 graduates from South Australian TAFE institutes found employment in a wide range of occupations. Many of these occupations were not specifically related to the occupational outcome for which the course was principally designed nor were they always what might otherwise be expected for graduates in the particular courses.

Table 21 shows a summary of South Australian course enrolments by course occupational category and occupation in which graduates were employed shortly after graduation in 1998.

Looking at the totals for all occupational groups at the base of the table, by far the largest categories of employment for graduates were intermediate clerical, sales and service workers (23.6% of the total) and trades and related workers (22.8% of the total). Also significant in size were the categories professionals (15.0%) and associate professionals (14.0%). The remainder were scattered relatively evenly across the five remaining occupational groups with percentages ranging from 6.9% to 2.7%.

Occupational focus of courses compared with graduate occupations

Table 21 also allows course occupational categories to be compared with occupations in which graduates were employed shortly after graduation (obtained from responses to the 1998 graduate destination survey).

- Only in the trades and related workers course category, which includes many apprentices and trainees, were the great majority of graduates employed in the same occupational category as that for which the courses were designed (73.9% of the graduate respondents from these courses).

- Other course categories for which course occupational category and post-graduation occupation were matched for more than half the graduates were, labourers and related workers (58.0%) and intermediate clerical, sales and service workers (54.2%).

- For other course categories there was generally considerable scatter, with a tendency for graduates to be employed initially in lower level occupations than the course undertaken. It should be noted that the Graduate Destination Survey was undertaken relatively soon after graduation (29 May 1998) and many graduates could be expected to move to higher level occupations at a later date.

[8] Note that the number of respondents who indicated that they had income from a traineeship during their course (Q28) and who answered the same employer/business question (Q41) is relatively small (N=130) and these results should be treated with some caution.

Table 21: Occupation of course and occupation at 27 May 1998 for 1997 TAFE graduates

		Occupation in which employed at 29 May 1998										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Row	% of
Occupational group of the course		% of row total									total	total
1	Managers and administrators	19.9	14.3	22.6	5.7	5.5	19.9	1.7	3.7	6.8	100.0	11.9
2	Professionals	5.2	37.1	13.4	3.2	4.0	27.4	2.1	4.7	3.0	100.0	27.1
3	Associate professionals	6.8	10.4	31.0	14.7	2.8	20.2	4.1	4.6	5.3	100.0	13.2
4	Trades and related workers	1.1	1.9	4.3	73.9	0.4	1.9	3.3	3.2	9.8	100.0	25.0
5	Advanced clerical and service workers	0.8	4.2	10.9	1.7	13.4	53.8	0.8	10.1	4.2	100.0	2.6
6	Intermediate clerical, sales and service workers	4.2	6.8	11.4	1.5	5.6	54.2	1.7	10.9	3.8	100.0	16.4
7	Intermediate production and transport workers*	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	100.0	0.1
8	Elementary clerical, sales and service workers	0.0	0.0	36.4	18.2	0.0	18.2	0.0	27.3	0.0	100.0	0.2
9	Labourers and related workers	10.2	4.5	3.4	10.2	1.1	3.4	4.5	4.5	58.0	100.0	1.9
10	Generic general education	0.0	2.9	14.3	17.1	4.3	20.0	12.9	15.7	12.9	100.0	1.5
All occupational groups		***5.9***	***15.0***	***14.0***	***22.8***	***3.6***	***23.6***	***2.7***	***5.6***	***6.9***	***100.0***	***100.0***

*There appears to be an anomaly in the tabulated data for students in the Intermediate production and transport workers course category: no graduates are shown as being employed in the corresponding occupational category, all instead being recorded in the categories for either managers and administrators or labourers and related workers. This is probably an artefact of the data classification system.

Benefits upon graduation in vocational education and training

Employment prospects

Table 22 shows the labour force status of South Australian TAFE graduates shortly after graduation at 29 May 1998.

The table shows that 80.8% of the total number of South Australian graduates were employed after graduating in their course (59.9% full time and 20.9% part time). This compared quite favourably with the figure of 58.1% for the Australian working-age population.

Table 22: TAFE graduate participation in the labour force at 29 May 1998

	Males	***Females***	***Total***
% of cases for which data are known	94.6	93.5	94.1
Employment status*	**% of *known* data**		
Employed: full-time	75.7	44.0	59.9
Employed: part-time	9.3	32.6	20.9
Unemployed	9.2	11.9	10.5
Not in labour force	5.8	11.6	8.7
Total	***100.0***	***100.0***	***100.0***
Number ('000)	***2.9***	***2.9***	***5.9***

*As at 29 May 1998 for the Graduate Destination Survey.
Note: percentages are based on that portion of the total number for which data are known.

Comparing the figures by sex shows that male graduates were much more likely to be employed full time (75.7%) than female graduates (44.0%). Conversely, females were more than three times as likely to be working part-time as males (females 32.6%, males 9.3%).

Table 23 shows characteristics of South Australian TAFE graduates employed at 29 May 1998.

The table shows that 60.0% of graduates unemployed before commencing their course found work after completing their course, 36.5% finding full-time work and 18.1% part-time.

When asked what period elapsed between graduation and finding employment, 28.2% of graduates said they found work within one month of graduating and a further 20.6% found work within one to three months.

About a quarter (25.3%) of graduates stated that the employment they were in was their first full-time job. The average weekly earnings of graduates in their first full-time job was $479.00.

For graduates who commenced TAFE study within 12 months of leaving school, 84.1% were employed by 29 May 1998 (that is, shortly after graduation) and 50.6% were in their first full-time job.

Table 23: Characteristics of employed graduates at 29 May 1998

Graduates unemployed prior to course		
% who found work after graduation	60.0	
found full-time work by 29 May 1998		*36.5*
found part-time work by 29 May 1998		*18.1*
Period between graduation and employment		
% of all graduates who found work within 1 month of graduating		*28.2*
% of all graduates who found work within 1 to 3 months of graduating		*20.6*
First full-time job		
% of all graduates in first full-time job		*25.3*
average weekly earnings in first full-time job		*$479*
Employment of school leavers who attended TAFE within 12 months of school		
% employed by 29 May 1998		*84.1*
% in first full-time job		*50.6*
Graduates undertaking further study		
% of all graduates undertaking further study	36.4	
at TAFE		*66.4*
at university		*22.6*
who received credit for previous TAFE study		*42.3*
employed full-time at 29 May 1998		*48.5*
employed part-time at 29 May 1998		*21.4*

Opportunities for further learning

Results of the TAFE Graduate Destination Survey show that:

- 36.4% of graduates undertook further study.
- Of those who undertook further study, 66.4% did so in TAFE and 22.6% in university.
- Of the graduates who were undertaking further study, 48.5% indicated they were employed full-time and 21.4% part-time.

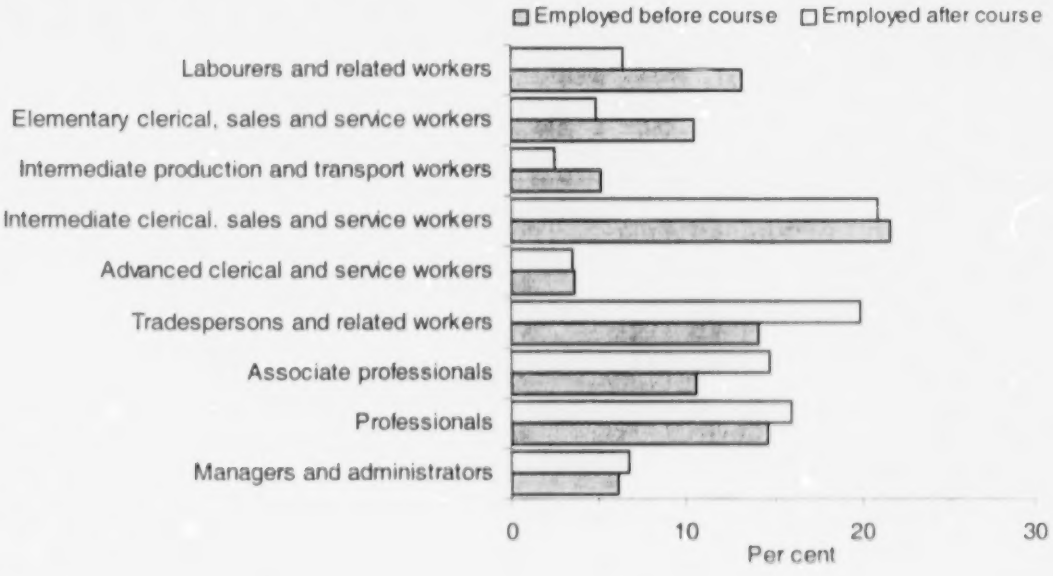
Opportunities for entry to other occupations

Results from the TAFE graduate destination survey showed that 39.7% of graduates who were employed both before and after their course changed occupations. The greatest occupational shift occurred for labourers and related workers in which 30.7% moved to the tradespersons and related workers occupation category. Only 37.2% of labourers and related workers did not change occupations.

Figure 13 is a graph showing the relative percentages of TAFE graduates, employed both before their course and after graduation, by occupational group. Comparison of employment status before and after course completion shows a shift from lower skilled occupations (in which there were falls in employment rates after graduation) to higher skilled occupations (which showed increases). Such a trend can be interpreted as confirmation of the value of TAFE vocational education and training programmes.

Other findings from the survey show that 22.5% of elementary clerical, sales and service workers moved to the intermediate clerical, sales and service category, and 22.0% of them moved to the tradespersons and related workers category. In addition, 26.9% of intermediate production and transport workers also moved to the tradespersons and related workers category, however, almost one third of them (32.2%) did not change their occupation after their course.

Figure 13: Per cent of occupational status of TAFE graduates in South Australia employed both before and after course completion



Student opinions on the vocational education and training system

Achievement of purpose for undertaking course

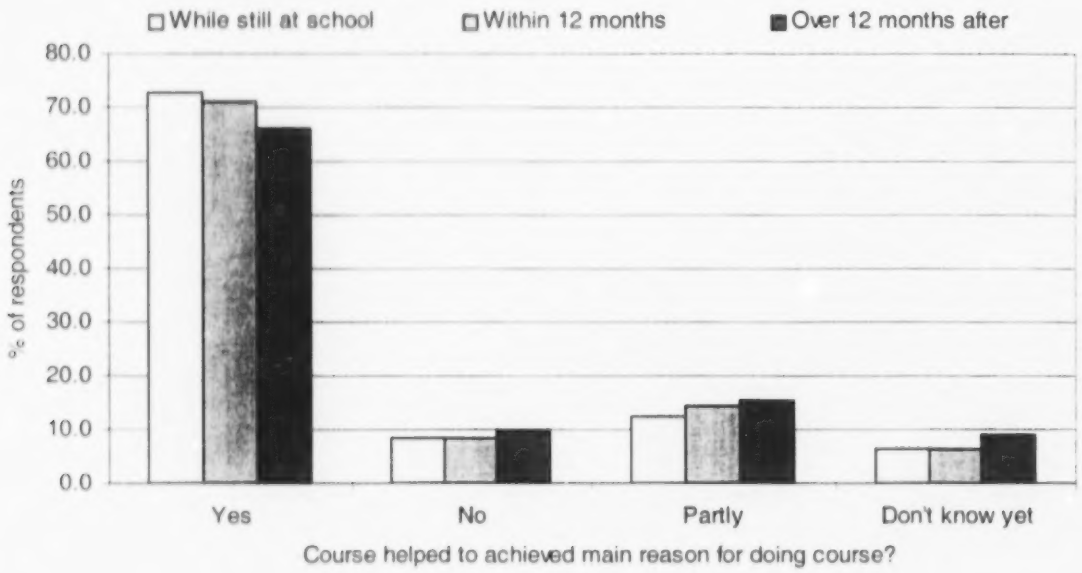
In the 1998 survey of South Australian TAFE graduates who completed a course of at least 200 hours or one semester in duration, respondents were asked whether or not the course helped them achieve their main reason for undertaking it. Their responses are summarised graphically in figure 14.

Of the 248 respondents who started their course whilst still at school, 72.6% said the course helped them achieve their main reason for enrolling, whilst a further 12.5% indicated that it had partly helped. Similarly, of the 1,406 respondents who started the course within 12 months of leaving school, 70.9% said the course helped them achieve their main reason for doing the course whilst 14.4% indicated that it had partly helped.

The percentage was lowest for the 4,085 graduates who started their course more than 12 months after leaving school with only 66.0% saying their course had helped them achieve their main reason for enrolling, although a further 15.2% indicated that the course had partly helped them.

The results suggest that the experience by way of outcomes varies somewhat according to how soon vocational education and training was undertaken after secondary schooling.

Figure 14: 1997 TAFE graduates in South Australia: Whether course helped to achieve main reason for doing course by when started



Satisfaction with the course

When South Australian TAFE graduates were asked to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of their course, their opinions were as follows:

- 81.6% of graduates whose main reason for undertaking their course was vocational, and who were employed, thought that their course had been relevant to their job
- 76.6% thought their instructors knowledge was good
- 68.1% rated the overall quality of the course as 'good'
- 65.2% thought convenience of venue and class times were good
- 52.8% believed they had enough equipment to practice on
- 51.5% were satisfied with course information
- 36.4% thought information available about careers was good.

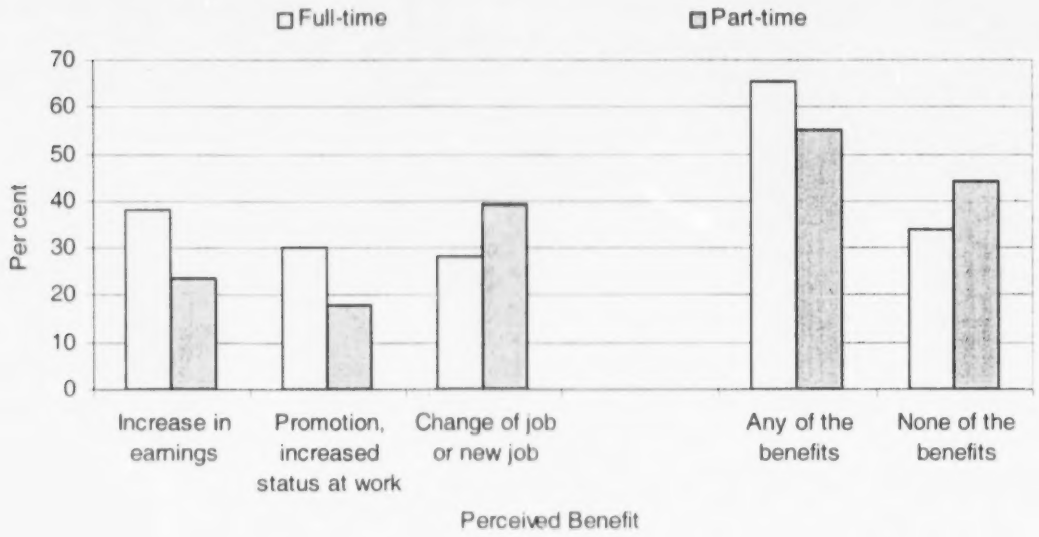
Perceived benefit from completion of course

Over half (60.3%) of employed graduates who undertook their course for vocational reasons achieved either an increase in earnings, a promotion, or a new job as a result of completing their course.

Figure 15 presents the percentage of perceived benefits received by employed TAFE graduates who undertook their course for vocational reasons. It shows that part-time workers were more likely to get a new job as a result of their course than full-time workers (39.1% and 30.5% respectively). It also shows that full-time workers (38.2%) were more likely to receive an increase in earnings than part-time workers (23.4%).

Other data show that the occupation category most likely to receive an increase in earnings after graduation was tradespersons and related workers (48.0%) whilst that least likely was labourers and related workers (13.0%).

Figure 15: Per cent of perceived benefits received by employed TAFE graduates in South Australia who did their course for vocational reasons



Employer opinions on the vocational education and training system

General measures of satisfaction

When South Australian employers were asked in the 1997 Employer Satisfaction Survey to rate on a scale from 1 to 10 how satisfied they were with the VET sector, 84% gave a score of 6 or more out of 10, this being above the national figure of 78%.

When asked if they thought the VET system was providing graduates with the skills appropriate to employers' needs, 65% felt that it was and 71% of employers felt that graduates could work with little or minimal supervision.

Regarding currency of training, almost 93% of employers rated the training provided by the VET sector as being current, useable, relevant or at the leading edge.

More than half the employers (55%) saw VET assessment processes as being rigorous and measuring skills relevant to the industry.

Almost half the employers (49%) felt that institutions were flexible with courses and 15% reported that institutions provided custom designed training.

All these results were equal to or higher than those reported nationally. South Australian employers were also more cognisant of recent developments such as competency based training and recognition of prior learning than were Australian employers generally.

Choice and use of providers

When employers were asked about choice of training providers, 31.2% believed it was 'very important' to their business that there be a choice and another 39.3% thought it was 'important'.

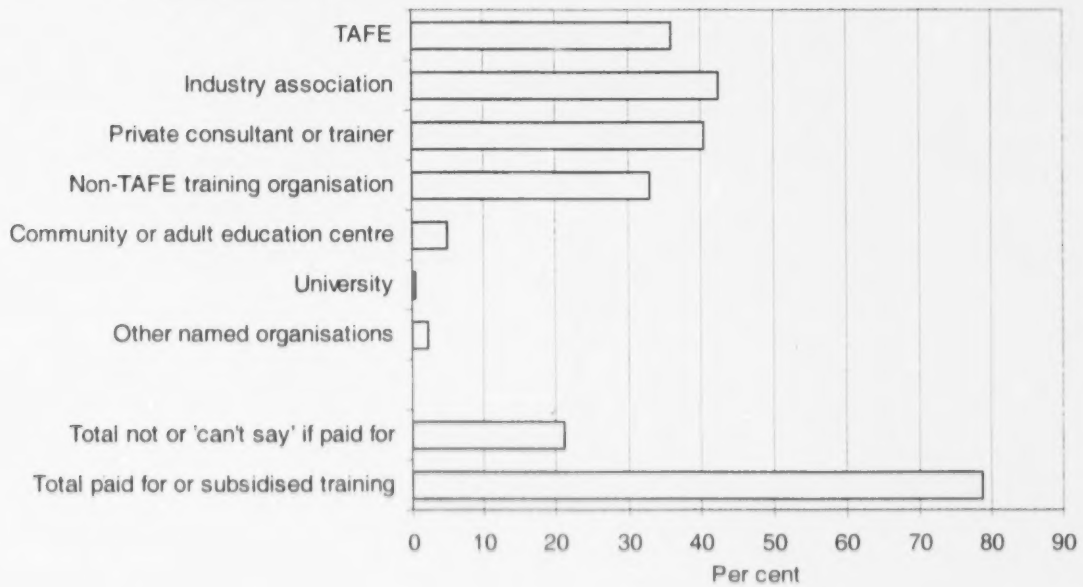
33.0% of employers indicated they would be more likely to choose a TAFE provider and 18.0% a non-TAFE provider to train their employees.

The 1996 ABS Employer Training Expenditure Survey[9] reported that 23.8% of South Australian employers provided training to their employees during the 1996 September quarter. The 1996 ABS Employer Training Practices Survey[10] reported that 33% of South Australian employers providing structured training used TAFE.

From figure 16, which presents the percentage of employers using various training organisations, it can be seen that TAFE providers were used as training providers by 36.1% of employers and industry associations by 42.6%.

Over three quarters of employers (78.8%) had paid for or subsidised the cost of employee training, whilst the remainder either did not pay or could not say if they had paid for any training.

Figure 16: South Australian employer use of various training organisations and employer payment or subsidies for training (per cent)



Value of training and support

When employers were asked their general opinions on training

- 72.1% agreed that training pays for itself through increased productivity
- 65.3% believed that on-the-job skills are more useful than skills acquired through formal vocational education
- 51.9% believed it is more cost effective to recruit trained people than to train people on the job
- 78.8% reported paying for or subsidising the cost of employee training (compared with 61.1% of TAFE graduates who reported receiving employer support in the way of paid fees, or paid or unpaid time off for classes).

[9] Employer Training Expenditure, Australia July–September 1996, ABS 6353.0

[10] Employer Training Practices, Australia February 1997, ABS 6356.0

Vocational education and training in the future

Employer views on changes likely to affect training requirements

South Australian employers were asked in the Employer Satisfaction Survey to comment on their perceptions of future training requirements in their industry.

In responding, 75.4% of employers nominated one or more changes in their industry which they thought could affect their training requirements. Table 24 is a summary of the frequency with which various factors were cited as being likely to influence future training requirements.

Three changes figured prominently in employers' responses. Advancing technology, which necessitated keeping up with technological changes including communication and automation, was the most frequently mentioned influence on future training requirements, being nominated by 34.4% of employers. Industries in which employers frequently said technological change would change their training requirements were communication services; retail trade; transport and storage; property and business services; wholesale trade; manufacturing; and agriculture.

The need for staff to be more qualified and skilled was nominated by 17.4% of employers. Government policies and legislation were nominated by 12.0% of employers, particularly those involved in provision of food and accommodation.

Other frequently mentioned changes ranged from 5.1% for changes to meet industry and business growth or expansion; 1.3% for emphasis on accreditation or quality assurance; to 0.4% for changes in work practices or direction.

Table 24: Factors likely to affect future training requirements.

	% of Total
Advancing technology and automation	34.4
Need for staff to be more qualified, skilled	17.0
Government policies, legislation	12.0
Growth, expansion of business / industry	5.1
Increased competition	3.9
Cost of training, budget cuts	3.1
Changes in customer demand, expectations	2.8
Changes in economy, economic markets	2.3
Emphasis on customer services, communication	2.0
Downsizing	1.4
Emphasis on accreditation, quality assurance	1.3
Changes in workloads, work availability	1.0
Changes in industry infrastructure	0.9
Changes in work practices, direction	0.4
Others (less frequently mentioned)	12.4
Total	***100.0***

Employer suggestions for improvement in vocational education and training

When asked to suggest areas and ways in which the vocational education and training system could be improved, 89.2% of employers gave one or more suggestions. Their main comments and suggestions are listed below.

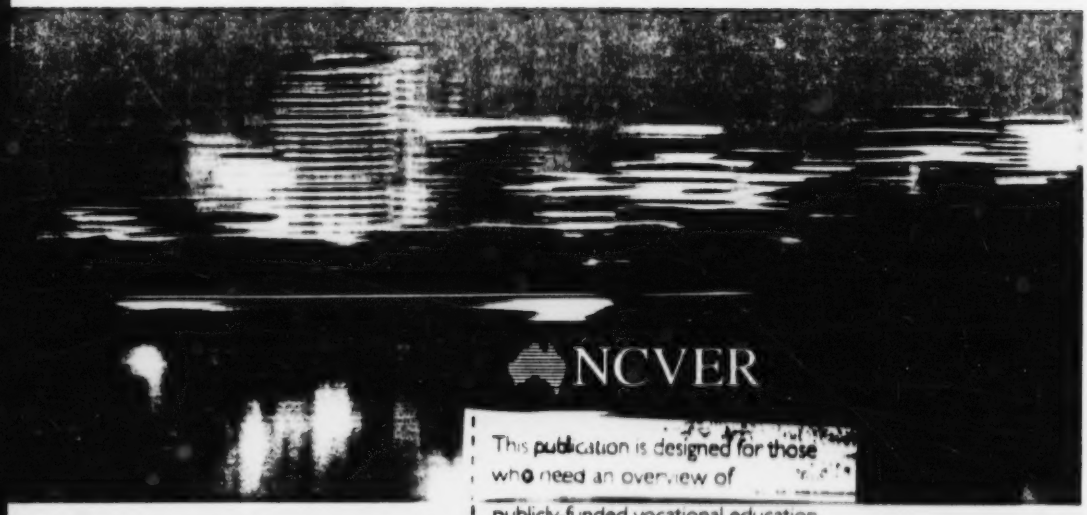
The need for training to be more specific, relevant and focussed to industry needs was most often nominated (by 23.2% of employers). Allied with this was the need for more practical on-the-job training with industry experience (13.5%).

More interaction (input and feedback from industry/employers to training providers and from training providers to industry/employers) was cited by 14.9% of employers. In similar vein, 5.9% of employers believed there should be improved communication and relationships between employers/industry and training providers.

The need for training to keep up with technological change was also commented on, with 4.6% of employers suggesting a need to provide teachers with more industry knowledge and 3.5% suggesting a need for training providers to keep up with technology and update courses in line with technological changes.

The need for improved dissemination of course information was also mentioned with 7.3% of employers saying training providers need to provide more information to employers and industry on courses available.

Finally, 3.1% of employers believed there is a need to instil better work ethics and drive in students.



NCVER

This publication is designed for those who need an overview of publicly-funded vocational education and training activity delivered under South Australia's vocational education and training system. It provides an overview of South Australian vocational education and training students, and the outputs and outcomes from the South Australian vocational education and training system in 1997.

Information is provided from a wide range of sources including the NCVER's 1998 Graduate Destination Survey and 1997 Employer Satisfaction Survey, national VET provider and apprentice and trainee data collections, and population and labour force statistics prepared by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

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